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## Closing the Open Door Policy: American Diplomatic and Military Reactions to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905

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CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR POLICY:  
AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY REACTIONS  
TO THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR OF 1904-1905

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

by  
Jonathan B. Ault

1994

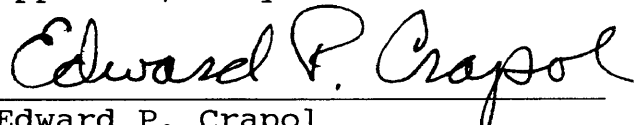
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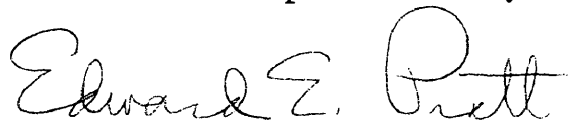
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the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

  
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Approved, July 1994

  
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## DEDICATIONS

I would like to dedicate this work to several people whose frequent encouragements and kind words made its completion possible: my father and mother, James and Barbara Ault, my brother, David Ault, and my grandparents, James B. Ault and Harry and Mary Clewell.

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## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to demonstrate how the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 wrought a profound change in American policy toward East Asia in general and Japan in particular. Prior to 1904, leaders in Washington perceived the nations of Europe to be the primary threat to America's burgeoning commercial and strategic interests in China. Seizures of Chinese territory by Germany, France, Britain, and Russia at the end of the nineteenth century underscored this belief. Secretary of State John Hay admonished these nations with his "Open Door" notes of 1899-1900, confident that words alone could restrain nations whose military power was widely dispersed over vast territorial realms. The United States had little else with which to defend its interests in the region.

Japan's stunning victory over Russia in 1904-05 shattered this complacency, as the formidable armed might of the island nation achieved virtual dominance of Korea, Manchuria, and the western Pacific Ocean. Unencumbered by an expansive empire, Japan could, unlike the imperial nations of Europe, concentrate its entire armed strength in East Asia, thereby posing an unprecedented threat to the Open Door policy.

In the summer of 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt sought to mediate a timely peace settlement between the belligerents, fearing that prolongation of hostilities would result in complete Japanese domination of East Asia. He envisioned a postwar balance of power in which Russia and Japan would preserve the Open Door in China by mutually checking each other's expansionist tendencies. At the same time, Roosevelt recognized that Hay's precepts required modification to acknowledge Japan's territorial ambitions in Korea and southern Manchuria. The tenuous peace that was framed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire that August represented an attempt to reconcile American and Japanese objectives in East Asia.

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Japan's military prowess also alarmed American leaders, who were only too aware of the virtual defenselessness of America's recent insular acquisitions in the Pacific Ocean, and of the decrepit state of American armed forces. With mixed results, Washington implored its citizens to recognize the necessity of abandoning their ingrained sense of isolation from international events and of effecting drastic improvements in American armed strength.

INTRODUCTION:

MOMENTARY OPTIMISM:

JOHN HAY CONFRONTS THE EUROPEAN CHALLENGE

IN CHINA, 1899-1900

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The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 signalled a new era in the relationship between Japan and the United States. Japan's remarkable victory in that war, the first successful Asian counterstrike against Western penetration, established Japan as the dominant power in East Asia and the western Pacific region. Previously, the latter decades of the nineteenth century had witnessed the simultaneous emergence of Japan and the United States as major industrial powers, and also the beginning of their determined participation in the international contest for political and economic influence in East Asia. Until 1904, however, American leaders assumed that their chief adversaries in this competition were the nations of Europe. The small Asian island nation, though emerging from its centuries-old cocoon of feudal isolation, largely escaped Washington's attention.

Events occurring at the end of the nineteenth century encouraged this perception. In 1894-95, Japan waged a stunning war against China, only to dilute its terms of peace at the concerted insistence of Russia, France, and Germany. Merely two years later, expansionist Europeans, ~~emboldened by the Sino-Japanese War's demonstration of~~ Chinese weakness, embarked upon a new series of territorial aggrandizements against the dying Qing Dynasty. In 1897, Russia occupied the Liaodong Peninsula and its harbor at Port Arthur.<sup>1</sup> The following year, Germany seized the ports

of Qingdao and Jiaozhou on the Shandong Peninsula, thereby rendering the approach by sea to the Chinese capital of Beijing dominated by European forces.<sup>2</sup>

Also in 1898, American forces easily ended more than three centuries of Spanish rule in Guam and the Philippine archipelago, replacing it with American governance.<sup>3</sup> Having thus gained the final insular "stepping stones" to the Asian continent by 1899, American leaders believed themselves able to dictate the terms of international activity in China. Although the United States lacked sufficient strength in East Asia to enforce its will there, Washington noted that its European rivals similarly wielded little power in that region, since their armed forces were dispersed in the defense of far-flung empires throughout the world. The ambitious "Open Door" Notes of 1899 and 1900, and also the participation of American forces in the international suppression of China's nationalistic "Boxer Rebellion" in 1900, reflected American determination to prevent the European political and commercial domination of China. ~~Russian occupation of Manchuria in the aftermath of the~~ Boxer Rebellion symbolized this continual European threat for the leaders in Washington.<sup>4</sup>

The war between Japan and Russia shattered this American fixation upon European schemes in East Asia. Although, prior to 1904, many Americans had predicted that

Russia, then the largest military power in the world, would crush the upstart Japanese in an armed confrontation, the initial Japanese triumphs at sea and on land in February of that year elicited the nearly universal, if surprised, approval of American leaders. President Theodore Roosevelt, long an admirer of Japan, particularly applauded the opening Japanese successes, perceiving them as serving the purpose of the "Open Door" policy. Impressed, he quickly sent journalists and American military personnel to observe and report the operations of the Japanese armies as they subsequently advanced through Korea and Manchuria. The leaders in Tokyo, perceiving the United States as a potential arbiter between Japan and Russia, reciprocated by sending to Washington a special envoy whose mission was to gain American support for their cause. Initially, Japan's "diplomatic offensive" easily won converts among prominent Americans who were repelled by the repressive and incompetent Russian government in St. Petersburg, and attracted by the progressive image which Meiji Japan projected. Ironically, however, Japan's military success against Russia eventually undermined the rapport between Japan and the United States. American observers' accounts of fanatically patriotic Japanese soldiers and sailors achieving an almost unbroken series of spectacular victories produced grave apprehensions in Washington through the

succeeding months. Although elated by Japan's rapid elimination of Russian preponderance in Manchuria, which served the American quest for an "Open Door" in China, American leaders began to fear a potential Japanese threat to the tenuous position of the United States in East Asia. Unlike the European nations, Japan could bring its entire military might to bear in defense of its growing interests on the Asian continent. Despite the strenuous diplomatic endeavors of Japan, several influential individuals in the United States eventually resurrected the specter of a "Yellow Peril," warning apocalyptically that Japan, drunk with its victory over Russia, might threaten all other Western claims in East Asia, including the ill-defended Philippine archipelago.

Subsequent American policy toward East Asia in general and Japan in particular reflected this fear. Roosevelt, in mediating the peace negotiations between Russia and Japan in the summer of 1905, sought to balance the strength of the two nations in the contested area, rather than allow Japan to supplant Russia there completely. Thereafter, he proved willing to abandon to a significant extent Washington's commitment to preserving the "Open Door" in China, realizing that American rhetoric proved no match for Japanese strength. Postwar American agreements with Japan, though invoking that ideal, nevertheless acknowledged a Japanese

"sphere of influence" which included Korea and southern Manchuria. American leaders sought in return for this concession assurances that Japan would respect the United States' "sphere of influence" in East Asia and the western Pacific Ocean. Simultaneously, Roosevelt urged Congress and American military officials to bolster the defenses of the nation's insular possessions and to augment its navy with new and larger vessels. His efforts met with varying degrees of success. This tacit admission of Japanese primacy in East Asia characterized America's transpacific relations for the next four decades.

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## ENDNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990), pp.229-230.

2. Ibid., pp. 229-230.

3. George J. O'Toole, *The Spanish War: An American Epic, 1898* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1984), p. 386.

4. Thomas G. Paterson; J. Garry Clifford; Kenneth J. Hagan, *American Foreign Policy, A History* (Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1988-1990; 2 Volumes), *I: To 1914*, p. 211.

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**CHAPTER I:**

**THERE CAN BE NONE MORE DANGEROUS IN ALL THE WORLD":**

**AMERICAN WITNESS TO JAPANESE OPERATIONS, 1904-1905**

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Japan's decision to plunge into hostilities with Russia in 1904 resulted from the latter's recent provocative incursions into the easternmost reaches of the Asian continent. The leaders in Tokyo had long smoldered with resentment toward Russia for its complicity in the dilution of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (which ended the Sino-Japanese War) in 1895, and for its subsequent seizure of the very territory which the European coalition had denied Japan. Moreover, Russian meddling in Korea after Japanese forces had eliminated Chinese influence there in 1895 continued to render the peninsula a dangerous threat to Japan's national security. Lastly, Russia's occupation of Manchuria in 1900 solidified the fears of Japanese leaders who envisioned eventual Russian domination of the Asian continent.

While preparing to combat the largest military power in the world through 1903 and the beginning of 1904, however, Japan's leaders grew aware of their inability to wage a protracted war against it. Despite glaring inadequacies in Russian logistics, as exemplified by the existence of only one isolated railroad connecting distant western Russia with Manchuria,<sup>1</sup> the government in Tokyo realized that, given sufficient time, the Russians would be able to amass an overwhelming concentration of land forces in the eastern hinterland that would swallow any army that Japan could deploy. Japan would therefore need to launch its operations



in the winter, when the weather hampered the mobility of the lone Trans-Siberian Railway, and then strive to win local superiority quickly.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, prior to commencing hostilities with Russia, Japanese leaders searched for a neutral nation that would offer to mediate a peace settlement once Japanese forces had gained supremacy in the theater of operations, and before substantial Russian reinforcements from the west could turn the tide. The United States seemed the most apt choice for the role of an impartial arbiter to the men in Tokyo. Britain, an ally of Japan, could not mediate without provoking Russian protest. France was an ally of Russia, and was therefore undesirable to the Japanese. Lastly, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany had been encouraging his cousin Tsar Nicholas II to pursue his quixotic dreams of building a Russian Far Eastern Empire, in order to draw the latter's attention and resources away from Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Prerequisite to enlisting the services of the United States, Japan needed to send a special envoy to Washington to plead its case. The Marquis Ito Hirobumi, Japan's senior statesman, selected Viscount Kaneko Kentaro, a former Harvard classmate of President Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>4</sup> Receiving his instructions directly from Ito on February 4, 1904, Kaneko initially expressed profound doubts about the prospects of winning American support, believing that the

United States had strong affinities with Russia. He noted that, in 1863, during the American Civil War, several vessels of the Russian navy had sailed into New York harbor, a gesture which many Americans had misinterpreted as a show of support for the Union (although, in actuality, the Russian ships had been searching for a neutral port at a time in which Britain threatened war with Russia in order to prevent Russian domination of Poland).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Kaneko knew of familial and business ties binding wealthy Americans and Russian aristocrats.<sup>6</sup> Disconsolately, he told Ito, "No matter how eloquently I may speak in America, I could not possibly draw it away from Russia."<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, with a desperate determination, Kaneko began his journey across the Pacific Ocean to the "Land of Darkness" on February 24, 1904.<sup>8</sup>

Kaneko need not have worried. Any sentimental bonds that existed between the United States and Russia had dissolved by early 1904. Anti-Semitic atrocities in Russia repelled many in the United States. In April, 1902, ~~horrified Americans had learned of the massacre of Jews in~~ the Bessarabian capital of Kishinev by the local Christian inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> President Roosevelt perceived such barbarity as symptomatic of a corrupt, incompetent government. In private letters to Secretary of State John Hay and others, he dismissed Tsar Nicholas II as "a preposterous little

creature" and asserted that "no human beings, black, yellow, or white could be quite as untruthful, as insincere, as arrogant - in short, as untrustworthy in every way - as the Russians under the present system."<sup>10</sup> For Roosevelt, a prime example of Russian perfidy was St. Petersburg's refusal to withdraw its forces from Manchuria, despite earlier promises to Beijing made in the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion to relinquish control of the region to China. Continued Russian occupation of Manchuria also jeopardized the "Open Door" policy objectives of the United States.

To Kaneko's pleasant surprise, Roosevelt and many other influential Americans applauded the Asian David that was courageously confronting the European Goliath. In the White House, Kaneko's former classmate, who had read widely about Japan, deeply admired the Japanese societal values embodied in the code of *bushido* and was profoundly impressed by Japan's rapid modernization.<sup>11</sup> In early February, 1904, prior to Kaneko's arrival in the United States, Oscar Straus, a close friend and advisor of Roosevelt, sent to the White House a letter which closed by saying, "Japan is certainly battling on the side of civilization - may wisdom and victory be on her side."<sup>12</sup> Roosevelt himself exulted that "Japan is playing our game (on behalf of the Open Door principle)" by challenging the Russian presence in East

Asia.<sup>13</sup> Kaneko found the people outside the nation's capital equally receptive. Many Americans somewhat naively attributed to Japanese leaders altruistic motives on behalf of Chinese nationhood. American business leaders enthusiastically received articles and speeches from the Japanese envoy, in which he envisioned future collaboration between Japan and the United States in furthering international commerce in East Asia.<sup>14</sup> Several prominent American bankers, angered by the plight of Russian Jews and by Russia's heavy-handed conduct in Asia, expressed to Kaneko their interest in extending loans to Tokyo to help Japan finance its war.<sup>15</sup> Some Americans harbored such hatred toward Russia that they were willing to go even further on Japan's behalf. Three thousand American Jews formed a volunteer army to assist the Japanese forces. Other Americans offered to donate a United States warship to Japan's navy.<sup>16</sup> As the historian Kamikawa Hikomatsu has noted, "American public opinion was favorable to Japan partly out of self interest and curiosity, but chiefly out of disinterested moral indignation at Russia."<sup>17</sup>

Such outpourings of support for Japan continued undiminished even after Americans learned of Japan's unorthodox manner of commencing hostilities. On the night of February 8, 1904, a squadron of Japanese destroyers from the fleet of Admiral Togo Heihachiro suddenly attacked the

Russian Far Eastern Fleet stationed at Port Arthur, inflicting serious damage upon three Russian vessels. This assault, an attempt to gain naval supremacy in the theater of operations, preceded Tokyo's formal declaration of war by two days.<sup>18</sup> Earlier that day, the first Japanese ground forces had landed at Chemulpo (Inchon) on Korea's west coast. The next day, February 9, another Japanese naval detachment destroyed the three Russian warships stationed at Chemulpo. These acts violated Korean neutrality.<sup>19</sup> St. Petersburg angrily accused the "insolent" Japanese of "treachery."<sup>20</sup>

Although some Americans criticized Japan for its abandonment of the conventional rules of war, they were in a distinct minority. In a letter to his son, Theodore, Jr., dated February 10, President Roosevelt affirmed that he "was thoroughly well pleased with the Japanese victory" at Port Arthur, and remarked that "the supine carelessness (of the Russians) is well-nigh incredible."<sup>21</sup> Five days later, Elihu Root, who had recently resigned his position as ~~Secretary of War~~, sent Roosevelt a letter in which he asked approvingly, "Was not the way the Japs began the fight bully?"<sup>22</sup> American newspapers echoed this sentiment, disparaging Russia for its lack of preparation. An editorial appearing in the *New York Times* on February 10 praised the "prompt, enterprising, and gallant feat of the Japanese

arms" and presciently observed that "the moral effect of this victory is of course immeasurably greater than its material consequences."<sup>23</sup> The next day, the *Times* scolded the Russians for charging Japan of wrongdoing:

It seems hardly to become the dignity of the ruler of a great nation to complain that he has been struck before he was quite ready...If Russia has been caught unprepared, the fault is surely her own. She has been protracting negotiations which it was quite evident could come to nothing...If Admiral (Evgeny) Alexeiev (the Russian Viceroy in the Far East, and the overall commander of all Russian naval and land forces there) did not have his preparations made and his searchlights going when the Japanese torpedo boats attacked him, he has nobody but himself to blame.<sup>24</sup>

Similar tactics would elicit a dramatically different response from the United States when they were later used against the American Pacific Fleet stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Washington's first official priority following the outbreak of the war was the preservation of the neutrality of the United States and its insular possessions in the Pacific Ocean. Roosevelt proclaimed American neutrality on February 15, 1904, severely limiting the access of belligerent vessels to ports owned by the United States.<sup>25</sup> Further, pursuant to limiting the geographical scope of hostilities and to maintaining the "Open Door" policy in

China, American leaders ambitiously sought to uphold the neutrality of Chinese territory outside of Manchuria. On February 10, Secretary of State Hay sent a proclamation of Chinese neutrality to the belligerent capitals, as well as to Berlin, Paris, and London; all subsequently indicated agreement.<sup>26</sup> Such assertions reflected the continuing beliefs in Washington that the United States could shape international behavior in East Asia with words alone, and that Europe should be the prime recipient of its admonitions.

The course of hostilities at sea and on land shattered these assumptions. As the custodian of American interests in the Pacific and East Asia, the American navy frequently proved unable to assert its role, especially as Japanese naval power gained dominance in the northwestern Pacific. The first indication of this trend was the Japanese naval assault upon Russian warships in Chemulpo (Inchon) on February 8-9, 1904. Though the Russians bravely steamed out of the Korean harbor to face destruction, Korean neutrality had become the first casualty of the conflict. One week later, the first division of soldiers that would comprise the Japanese First Army under the command of General Kuroki Tametomo landed at the embattled port. On February 25, Japanese forces in Seoul exacted from the Korean government a treaty which transformed the peninsula

into a Japanese protectorate.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, Roosevelt acknowledged Japanese hegemony over Korea, "which has shown its utter inability to stand by itself."<sup>28</sup>

Through subsequent months, Japanese naval superiority in the area of hostilities continued to grow as Togo strove to trap the Russian Far Eastern Fleet in Port Arthur. The effects of this accrument of strength eventually compromised Chinese neutrality, American protests notwithstanding. The final Japanese naval blow against the ill-fated Port Arthur Fleet occurred on August 10, 1904, as the Russian ships made a desperate dash for the freedom of the northern port of Vladivostok. En route, they encountered the bulk of Togo's fleet in the Yellow Sea. Though both navies sustained heavy damage in the ensuing engagement, the result was another Japanese victory. Their admiral killed, most of the battered Russian vessels retreated to Port Arthur, where they remained for the duration of the war; the other Russian ships fled toward neutral harbors along the Asian coast.<sup>29</sup>

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Therein lay the rub. Most of the Russian warships that reached ports in China and French Indochina were disarmed and interned for the remainder of the war without incident. However, disputes concerning other Russian naval refugees demonstrated to the United States the difficulties of enforcing the belligerents' respect of Chinese neutrality.



On August 11, the day after the battle, the Russian cruiser *Ryeshitelni* requested internment in the port of Zhefu on the Shandong Peninsula, where it proceeded to disarm in the presence of other vessels belonging to various nations, including the United States. Suddenly, outside the harbor loomed two Japanese destroyers whose commander demanded the surrender of the Russian vessel. Ignoring protests from the American and the other neutral ships, the Japanese ships entered the harbor and towed the Russian ship away; subsequently, the ship was incorporated into Togo's fleet.<sup>30</sup>

The next day, two other Russian warships, the *Askold* and the *Grosovoi*, sought refuge and repairs in Shanghai; Japan angrily demanded their expulsion from the Chinese port. Though several American destroyers were stationed in Shanghai, the American Consul-General there, John Goodnow, cabled Washington for advice. Unwilling to commit the American navy to the defense of Chinese neutrality, since it was now becoming clear that such a policy would prevent the use of American vessels elsewhere, Roosevelt ordered the ~~chief American naval officer in the vicinity, Admiral Yates~~ Stirling, not to interfere in the event of combat between Russian and Japanese vessels in Chinese ports. The President and acting Secretary of State Alvie Adee also warned Goodnow not to uphold the neutrality of Shanghai either alone or in conjunction with the other neutral envoys there. Though the

crisis was finally resolved on August 24, when the two Russian vessels agreed to disarmament and internment, the incident impelled Washington to abandon its earlier advocacy of Chinese neutrality.<sup>31</sup> Roosevelt thereafter contended that the Chinese ports should relinquish their claims to neutrality, and become "spheres of hostility to which the Russians could no longer run if followed."<sup>32</sup> Washington thus began to abdicate its avowed role as the guarantor of the "Open Door" policy in China, in response to demonstrated inability to enforce its terms.

Having virtually abandoned the defense of Chinese neutrality, Washington then endeavored to isolate the Philippine archipelago through the remaining months of the war. Although the Russian fleet at Port Arthur was no longer a subject of concern after August, American leaders learned in October of 1904 that Russia's Baltic Fleet, under the command of Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvenski, had left the port of Reval (in present-day Estonia) and embarked on the arduous 18,000-mile voyage to the area of operations.<sup>33</sup> As ~~--- Rozhdestvenski's ships crawled eastward, advance Japanese~~ naval patrols steamed to Singapore, causing American naval officials to believe that the engagement between the opposing fleets, should it occur, would take place somewhere in the southern Pacific. Accordingly, Admiral Stirling was ordered in January of 1905 to consolidate all of his naval

forces in the Philippines in order to prevent belligerent intrusion into the islands' harbors.<sup>34</sup>

The anticipation ended on May 27, 1905. On that day, in the greatest naval battle since Trafalgar a century earlier, Togo crushed Rozhdestvenski's exhausted fleet in the Straits of Tsushima, which divide Japan from Korea. As the slow Russian vessels advanced in single file, Togo's fleet "crossed the T" and inflicted a devastating fire upon them. All through the following night, Japanese torpedo boats harried the surviving enemy ships, and, on the morning of May 28, the few Russian ships still afloat in the area surrendered. Only three vessels from the Baltic Fleet successfully reached Vladivostok; other refugees fled for Shanghai and other neutral ports. The losses sustained by the two navies attested to the lopsided nature of the Japanese victory. Rozhdestvenski, seriously wounded in the fight and captured at its conclusion, lost sixteen of his twenty-nine battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, including his flagship, the *Suvarov*. During the battle and its aftermath, over 13,500 Russian sailors were either killed, taken prisoner, or interned in neutral countries. In striking contrast, Togo's navy had lost only three torpedo boats; though several other Japanese ships were badly damaged, they were still operational. Moreover, the Japanese incurred only 700 casualties during the engagement.<sup>35</sup>

Thereafter, the Japanese navy wielded uncontested dominance of the western Pacific Ocean. A distinguished naval historian, Roosevelt sent an ebullient note of congratulation to Kaneko on May 31, asserting that "neither Trafalgar nor the defeat of the Spanish Armada was as complete - as overwhelming" as the Japanese triumph.<sup>36</sup>

The aftermath of Tsushima presented the American navy with a challenge to the preservation of neutrality in the Philippines. In early June of 1905, three Russian cruisers that had survived the battle (the *Oleg*, the *Aurora*, and the *Zhemchug*) limped into Manila Bay. Upon arrival, the Russian commander, Admiral Oscar Enquist, pleaded for supplies and repairs for his stricken ships. Roosevelt himself refused this request. Instead, he demanded that the Russian vessels either leave Manila Bay within twenty-four hours or submit to internment. The drained Russians chose the latter option.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the naval war between Russia and Japan demonstrated the limits of the American ability to insulate Chinese ports from the impact of combat in the surrounding waters, which was an integral aspect of the "Open Door" policy. Thereafter, Washington was aware that a determined belligerent wielding local naval superiority in that region could easily thwart American policy objectives. As illustrated by the seizure of the *Ryeshitelni*, vessels of

the Japanese navy could range virtually at will in Chinese harbors, with American and European agents having little besides words with which to counter them. Moreover, American naval power could not shield the Philippine archipelago from the effects of foreign conflict in that vicinity. Three of the Russian naval vessels that had survived Tsushima successfully penetrated Manila Bay, despite American efforts to isolate the islands from belligerent activity. The convalescence of the Russian cruisers there represented a substantial retreat from the original parameters which Roosevelt had delineated in his proclamation of American neutrality at the outbreak of hostilities. The sudden, unchallenged predominance of the formidable Japanese navy in the western Pacific after its destruction of the Baltic Fleet further emphasized the tenuousness of the American position in that region. After his jubilation at the climactic outcome of the naval war subsided, Roosevelt soon perceived its implications. Sobered by this realization, he expressed his concern in a confidential letter to Senator

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Henry Cabot Lodge on June 5, 1905:

While we had thought that the probabilities favored Togo's victory, most of us, and certainly I, had thought that the fight would be close, that there was some chance for the Russians, and that at least there would be a terrible battering of the Japanese ships. No one anticipated that it would be a rout and a slaughter rather than a fight; that the

Russian fleet would be absolutely destroyed while the Japanese fleet was left practically uninjured.<sup>38</sup>

For the first time in history, a major naval power had its entire arsenal concentrated in the western Pacific, thus posing a new challenge to the comparatively dispersed Western navies.

Japan's armies proved equally effective in demonstrating their primacy in East Asia, and the corresponding frailty of Washington's "Open Door" policy in China. Roosevelt was already well aware of the prowess of the Japanese soldier. During the international suppression of the Boxer Rebellion, he had received letters from American soldiers in China which suggested that the Japanese soldiers outclassed their Western comrades; impressed, Roosevelt had remarked to his German friend Hermann Speck von Sternburg, "What natural fighters they are!"<sup>39</sup> In 1904, with the inefficiency of the American army in the war with Spain still a recent memory, the President quickly perceived ~~the war between Japan and Russia as an opportunity to~~ witness the methods of the Japanese land forces and learn from them. For this task, he enlisted the services of several journalists and officers in the American army.

He encountered little difficulty in finding volunteers. War correspondents such as Frederick Palmer, J. Martin

Miller, and Richard Harding Davis eagerly embraced the opportunity to capture the impending drama in words.<sup>40</sup> From among its officers, the United States Army sent such contemporary and future luminaries as General Arthur MacArthur and his twenty-four-year-old son Douglas, Captain Peyton C. March, and Captain John J. Pershing to observe the Eastern conflagration.<sup>41</sup> Though American observers accompanied the Russian as well as the Japanese armies, Washington's attention was riveted upon the latter.

Between mid-February and early May of 1904, the world's attention devolved upon General Kuroki Tametomo's army as it marched northward along the muddy roads of Korea toward Manchuria, fending off sporadic attacks by Cossack cavalry raiders en route.<sup>42</sup> Arrayed on the northern bank of the Yalu River against this advancing column was a smaller Russian army under the command of Lieutenant-General Mikhail Zasulich. Although the overall commander of Russian land forces in Manchuria, General Alexei Kuropatkin, had ordered Zasulich to withdraw if outnumbered, Zasulich, "scoffing at Kuropatkin's suggestion that the Japanese were to be regarded as the equals of European troops," chose to give battle instead.<sup>43</sup> This decision proved to be a foolish mistake. The two armies clashed on April 25; after several days of pounding the Russian position on the northern bank with artillery, the Japanese army emerged victorious on May

1.<sup>44</sup> Although the battle of the Yalu River was a minor engagement in comparison with the epic struggles that lay ahead, it had been the proving ground for Japan. Thereafter, "it was no longer a collection of tiny islands inhabited by curious little people, but a new and serious factor in international affairs."<sup>45</sup>

The significance of this engagement was not lost upon contemporary Western citizens. Kuroki's victory persuaded American and British bankers that the Japanese war effort was a sound investment; for the duration of the conflict, they willingly extended to Tokyo loans of almost unprecedented magnitude.<sup>46</sup> The *New York Times*' report of the battle, which appeared on May 3, offered a prescient comment on its long-term ramifications:

Although the defeat of a fraction of the Tsar's huge army is not necessarily decisive, the consequences of this battle promise to be far-reaching. Rivals and subject races alike have waited for Russia to make good her boasts and affirm the predominance to which she both aspires and pretends. She has given battle on ground of her own choosing, and has been badly beaten by a despised and Oriental army. The echoes of the battle will reverberate afar, and distant is the day when the story will weary in the telling among the races of the unforgiving East.<sup>47</sup>

Two weeks after the triumph on the Yalu, Captain Peyton C. March presented his credentials to Kuroki as the Japanese hero led his forces through Manchuria. Both Palmer and March



accompanied the Japanese First Army on its trek until the following November.<sup>48</sup> March was immediately struck at the ease with which Japanese spies obtained information about Russian movements. As he later reported, "(the Japanese soldiers') familiarity with the Chinese language; the readiness with which a Japanese can simulate a Chinese; and the utter impossibility of the big, blue-eyed, fair Russian successfully accomplishing such a feat, gives to the Japanese a great advantage while operating in this country."<sup>49</sup> Reinforcements from western Russia (who were widely regarded as qualitatively superior to their Siberian comrades) failed to blunt the Japanese thrust that summer.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, three more Japanese armies landed in Manchuria, attracting the attention of other American observers. Similar to the early experiences of Kuroki's vanguard, these armies, operating independently, initially encountered relatively small bodies of Russian soldiers. In May, the Japanese Second Army, under the command of General Oku Yasukata, appeared on the Liaodong Peninsula to the north of Port Arthur, where it trounced a Russian regiment led by Colonel Nikolai Tretyakov at Nanshan (May 25-26).<sup>51</sup> After thus isolating Port Arthur from the main Russian forces in Manchuria, Oku turned northward, while General Nogi Maresuke's Third Army prepared to batter the surrounded harbor into submission.<sup>52</sup> Lastly, advancing between the

armies under Kuroki and Oku was the Fourth Army, led by General Nozu Michitsura.<sup>53</sup>

Although engagements of limited scale continued to characterize the land war into the early summer of 1904, the Japanese campaign gradually obtained a guise of much vaster proportions as three of the armies converged upon the Manchurian city of Liaoyang, the administrative center of Kuropatkin's forces. In order to coordinate the Japanese plunges into Manchuria, Field-Marshal Oyama Iwao assumed the task of their overall direction in early July of 1904. He left Japan with his chief of staff, the brilliant Lieutenant-General Kodama Gentaro, to join Oku's army on July 6.<sup>54</sup> As the three Japanese armies became welded into a single unit, several Western observers began to believe that the impending battle would decide the outcome of the war. General Sir Ian Hamilton, Britain's military observer with Kuroki's army, remarked in his wartime diary on August 23, "What a splendid thing to be alive, and to be taking part in the great final trek of the Manchurian War!"<sup>55</sup>

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Though the battle which erupted south of Liaoyang three days later did not occur at the end of the "final trek" of Oyama's troops, it was the first full-scale land engagement of the war. Witnessing this struggle raging along a ten-mile front, Palmer declared, "The great conflict (has) begun!" and added, "the havoc of five hundred guns was outlined as

clearly as the battle panorama of a Gettysburg or a Sedan."<sup>56</sup> Outnumbered by the Russians (125,000 Japanese soldiers against 158,000 Russian troops), the Japanese compensated for their numerical inferiority with bold tactics and superior organization. As a result, Oyama eventually forced Kuropatkin to retreat northward on the morning of September 4. Nevertheless, the Japanese soldiers, their supply of ammunition depleted, could not contest the Russian retreat. Though he had successfully outmaneuvered Kuropatkin, Oyama nevertheless paid a high price for victory at Liaoyang. Japanese casualties greatly outweighed the Russian losses.<sup>57</sup> For the remainder of September, the Japanese cautiously advanced northward as their adversaries gave ground. An attempted Russian counteroffensive in October proved to be a costly failure.<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile, to the south, Nogi's Third Army struggled to reduce the Russian garrison in Port Arthur. Nogi, who had easily captured Port Arthur in November of 1894 during the war with China,<sup>59</sup> initially expected a similarly rapid Russian collapse. He was gravely mistaken. Despite debilitating sickness, constant bickering among the Russian garrison's commanders, and sporadic bombardments from Togo's navy, the Russian forces there heroically resisted Japanese pressure. The efficient, hard-working commander of the fortress, Lieutenant-General Constantine Smirnov, endeavored

to improve long-neglected defensive positions in the hills surrounding the harbor. Furthermore, after Port Arthur's fleet returned for the last time following the battle of the Yellow Sea on August 10, 1904, the garrison mounted the ships' guns on the hills in an effort to counter the threat posed by Nogi's army.<sup>60</sup>

Undaunted, the Japanese general attempted to overwhelm the Russians with a frontal assault on August 19; by August 23, the Russians had repulsed the enemy attackers, inflicting thousands of casualties.<sup>61</sup> In late September, Nogi's forces made unsuccessful and costly efforts to capture forts along the Russian line of defense, and also the strategic heights which afforded a commanding view of the harbor. Finally, armed with eleven-inch Krupp siege guns imported from Germany, the Japanese army pounded the garrison and the town incessantly, driving many Russian defenders into underground bunkers.<sup>62</sup> This barrage gradually eroded the garrison's capacity to resist. At the end of November, Nogi tried to capture the heights again; though thousands of Japanese soldiers were killed or wounded in this attack, the crucial promontories were nevertheless in Japanese possession by December 5. Soon, Japanese artillery guns appeared on their summits, from which they dealt the final blows to Port Arthur's fleet and garrison. Ultimately, the garrison's chief commander,

Lieutenant-General Anatole Stoessel, was compelled to surrender to Nogi on January 2, 1905.<sup>63</sup>

The fall of Port Arthur sparked varying reactions across the United States. Japanese students at Yale University, after overcoming initial disbelief, ecstatically embraced one another in their dormitory's halls.<sup>64</sup> Articles in the *New York Times* on January 3 captured the drama of the long siege, describing the fortress as a "veritable hell" in which the isolated Russian defenders eventually had little more than bayonets with which to fend off the Japanese onslaughts.<sup>65</sup> Another article reflected briefly upon the then unknown human cost which Japan had paid for the capture of Port Arthur:

Japanese energy has prevailed (over Russian stubbornness), but at what a terrible price the world is as yet in ignorance. All that is known is that the cost in human life was fearful, and that in modern times, no military commander had previously dared sacrifice men as Nogi sacrificed them in the (Liaodong) Peninsula.<sup>66</sup>

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Lastly, declaring that "the Gibraltar of the Far East is in a heap of ruins,"<sup>67</sup> a *Times* editorialist demanded an immediate peaceful solution to the conflict between Russia and Japan, even if international intervention should prove necessary to separate the combatants:

Why should not the impartial world now at last intervene to stop the further effusion of blood, and to save brave but unready Russia the consequence of the defeats arising from her own unpreparedness to execute the bold programme she has framed? Is it not clear that Japan has won the war?...How can France possibly desire that her ally (Russia) shall weaken itself still further in the prosecution of a war which can have no triumphs, and which only stupid stubbornness can refuse to accept as already decided?<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, the editorial prophetically warned, "...there are already ominous signs of what the prolongation of the war may mean to Russia in the internal disturbance of her empire, of how soon she may have to reckon with an enemy of the autocracy yet more formidable than the Japanese."<sup>69</sup> Less than three weeks later, on Sunday, January 22, 1905, guards in front of Tsar Nicholas II's Winter Palace in St. Petersburg fired into a large crowd of the "little father's" subjects that had gathered to appeal to the Tsar to undertake sorely needed reforms. Several hundred were either killed or wounded.<sup>70</sup> The "Bloody Sunday" massacre, in part a product of the growing war-weariness afflicting the country, ignited unprecedented revolutionary outbursts against the autocratic government.

Despite such clamoring for peace, the war in Manchuria rapidly approached its climax as Nogi's army, having finally conquered Port Arthur, rushed northward to join the other

three Japanese armies in support of Oyama's final attempt to bring the Japanese campaign to a decisive conclusion. The ensuing battle for the Manchurian capital of Mukden, extending along a front line eighty miles in length and pitting nearly 500,000 Russian and Japanese troops against one another, was the largest engagement in human history prior to the First World War. Once again, Oyama sought to outflank his adversary in the clash which began on February 21, 1905. Before the Japanese forces could sever the Russian line of retreat, however, Kuropatkin withdrew his remaining troops northward on March 9. The Russian flight to Harbin, forty miles distant, continued through the next day. The final major clash of the war in Manchuria had cost both armies dearly; Kuropatkin had lost one third of his manpower, and Oyama had sacrificed one fourth of his forces in his last, unsuccessful attempt to eliminate the Russian army.<sup>71</sup> Pending the influx from the west of Russian reinforcements sufficient to alter the strategic balance in Manchuria, Oyama wielded supremacy in the area of hostilities. Disappointed, the Tsar replaced Kuropatkin with Lieutenant-General Nicholas Linievich on March 12.<sup>72</sup> Roosevelt enthusiastically received the news of this epic conclusion of the land war. In an effusive note to Kaneko, the President exclaimed, "Wonderful! Wonderful! Unparalleled in the world. A great victory! The way things look,

everything is moving forward at great speed. Hurrah for Japan!"<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately for Japan, however, Oyama's forces emerged from the great battle exhausted and unable to advance further. To make matters worse, the ability of the home islands to sustain the rigors of wartime production was rapidly waning; unlike the Russians, the Japanese lacked the means to replace the losses in personnel and materiel that were incurred in the struggle for Mukden.<sup>74</sup> Tokyo's secrecy concealed this tenuous situation from foreign knowledge. As a result, many Western leaders mistakenly believed that the war in Manchuria had ended decisively in Japan's favor, and that Oyama's forces were poised for further conquest. In his letter to Senator Lodge on June 5, 1905, Roosevelt predicted that "in a few months, more or less - certainly in a year or so - the Japanese will take every Russian army or fortress on the Pacific Slope, and will practically drive Russia east of Lake Baikal."<sup>75</sup>

Further underscoring Japan's growing dominance in East Asia was the covert use of Chinese collaborators by the Japanese armies in Manchuria, in violation of the Chinese neutrality which the United States had initially attempted to uphold. Though the Qing government in Beijing declared its neutrality at the outset of hostilities, the independent-minded Yuan Shikai, then the chief administrator



of northeastern China, secretly aided the Japanese in various ways, in the hopes that they would champion China's nationhood at war's end. Yuan established an elaborate espionage network in which Chinese agents infiltrated Russian bases in Manchuria, thus often obtaining valuable military information which soon became known to Japanese officers. He also supplied the Japanese troops with warm clothing and blankets during the cold winter of 1904-05; in contrast, the Russian soldiers had scant protection from the elements. Though Russian statesmen soon suspected Chinese collusion with Japan, and issued complaints to Washington, the United States could do little to redress this problem, except seek assurances of Chinese neutrality from Beijing, whose leaders remained unaware of Yuan's covert activities.<sup>76</sup>

The almost unbroken series of Japanese victories in Korea and Manchuria gradually culminated in a crescendo. Though the invading Japanese armies initially encountered much smaller groups of Russian soldiers, reflecting Russia's early underestimation of its foe, the latter stages of the land campaign witnessed titanic engagements as the advancing Japanese armies united and confronted the entire Russian force in Manchuria. Although the Japanese armies ultimately failed to annihilate their Russian adversaries (in contrast to Togo's final naval victory), their impressive, albeit

costly, triumphs wrought a sobering effect upon American leaders, who quickly realized that Japan potentially threatened the weakly defended claims of the United States in East Asia with strength on land as well as at sea.

Japan's stunning victories inspired American comparisons between Japanese military leaders and illustrious Western men of arms. In the estimation of at least one American newspaper in 1905, the Japanese army and navy merited comparison with the European models which they had originally sought to emulate. Reporting on Oyama's triumph at Mukden in the *New York Times* on March 12, 1905, the American military analyst Captain William G. Haan likened the Japanese commander to Count Helmuth von Moltke, the Chief of the formidable Prussian General Staff during Otto von Bismarck's wars for German unification.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, after Togo smashed the Baltic Fleet at Tsushima, the *Times* lauded him as "Japan's (Horatio) Nelson," the British naval hero of the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>78</sup>

Though he shared this admiration for Japan, Roosevelt harbored apprehensions that military success against Russia would infect Japan with a belligerent attitude that would destroy the international friendships that the leaders in Tokyo had striven to cultivate over the previous decades. As early as June of 1904, the President, conferring with Kaneko and Takahira Kogoro (Japan's ambassador to the United

States), informed them of his belief that "their chief danger was lest Japan might get the 'big head' and enter into a general career of insolence and aggression; that such a career would undoubtedly be temporarily very unpleasant to the rest of the world, but that it would in the end be still more unpleasant for Japan."<sup>79</sup> Such misgivings were likely magnified by reports indicating the intense patriotism and dedication to duty among Japanese soldiers, which cast a potentially menacing aspect upon their victories. In his memoir *Human Bullets*, a postwar best-seller in Japan, Lieutenant Sakurai Tadayoshi, a participant in the siege of Port Arthur, captured in words the ethos of the Japanese soldier:

When I offered my last prayers - the last, I then believed they were - before the family shrine of my ancestors (at the outset of the war), I felt a thrill going all through me, as if they were giving me a solemn injunction, saying, "Thou art not thy own. For His Majesty's sake, thou shalt go to save the nation from calamity, ready to bear even the crushing of thy bones, and the tearing of thy flesh. Disgrace not thy ancestors by an act of cowardice."<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, in retrospective response to a note written by an astonished Russian officer which declared, "The Japanese army knows how to march, but not how to retreat,"<sup>81</sup> Sakurai retorted,

"Back-roving" was ridiculed by the old warriors of Japan - our modern fighters also despise the idea of retreating. It may be a mistake, but "to show one's back to the enemy" has always been considered the greatest disgrace a *samurai* could bring upon himself. This idea is the central military principle of the people of Japan. This note of the Russian general is good testimony to the spirit pervading our ranks, "determined to the death" and to fight on with strenuous perseverance. Every time we fought, we won, because we did not believe in retreating.<sup>82</sup>

American characterizations of the Japanese soldier corroborated Sakurai's sweeping prose. Accompanying his father, the young Douglas MacArthur encountered the personnel of Japan's army for the first time in the autumn of 1904. During his visit, this future opponent of the armed might of Japan met the chief Japanese wartime commanders, whom he described years later as "grim, taciturn, aloof men of iron character and unshakeable purpose."<sup>83</sup> Moreover, MacArthur recalled, "(the Japanese soldier's) almost fanatical belief in and reverence for his Emperor impressed me indelibly."<sup>84</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Edward J. McClernand, who observed the Japanese soldiers in Manchuria after they won the battle of Mukden, later referred to the Japanese army as a "military machine"<sup>85</sup> whose component parts were paragons of "intelligence, patriotism, abstemiousness, (and) obedience to, and inborn respect for, legally constituted authority."<sup>86</sup> Further, Lloyd Griscom, the American

ambassador to Japan, later asserted that "the Japanese were probably the greatest marchers in the world," noting that "men who had spent their lives toiling in the fields on a diet of rice found it no hardship to plod along all day with heavy packs on their backs."<sup>87</sup> The formidable army that emerged from such descriptions contrasted alarmingly with its contemporary American counterpart.

Understandably, military success against Russia wrought a profound change in Japan's national self-image. As historian Akira Iriye has pointed out, "The Japanese, who for so many years had been accustomed to deferring to everything Western and feeling inferior to white people, now realized that they were equal to any race, any nation in the world. They were finding through experience that men were all equal, that their racial differences were immaterial, and what counted was their power, intelligence, and morality."<sup>88</sup> Former Foreign Minister Okuma Shigenobu captured this new national confidence in a wartime speech: "The war, the Japanese feel, proves that there is nothing that Westerners do which Asians cannot do, or that there is nothing Westerners try that Asians cannot also try."<sup>89</sup> This awareness of parity with the Western nations fueled an expansionistic impulse which carried a strong national sense of mission in East Asia. The first issue of the nationalistic magazine *Katsudo no Nihon* (*Active Japan*)

sounded the charge in May of 1904 with proclamations of "Japan's inevitable expansion."<sup>90</sup> Subsequent issues articulated the global vision of Japanese expansionists. In March of 1905, Ozaki Yukio, the mayor of Tokyo, wrote, "Now that Japan has achieved world-power status, we must stop being content with crouching in a small corner of the earth. We must broaden our vision and venture out to all parts of the world - Africa, South America, North America, everywhere in east and west - in order to make the whole universe our sphere of action."<sup>91</sup> Simultaneously, these spokesmen for the new Japan expounded upon their nation's duty to lead the rest of Asia on the road to modernity. Yano Ryukei, author of *Sekai ni okeru Nihon no shorai* (*Japan's Future in the World*), published in February of 1905, argued that Japan should acquire a position of influence in East Asia analogous to that of the United States in the Western Hemisphere and that of Britain in Africa and Australia.<sup>92</sup>

As hostilities with Russia drew to a close, these Japanese nationalists did not foresee future animosity toward the United States, despite its growing position in East Asia and its own sense of mission there. Though they acknowledged that the possibility of Japanese-American commercial rivalry in Asia and the Pacific loomed on the horizon, they confidently predicted a cooperation between the two nations based upon a shared commitment to "peaceful

progress" in the world arena.<sup>93</sup> The American role in the restoration of peace between Japan and Russia and in postwar Asia would undermine this optimistic forecast.

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## **CHAPTER II:**

**THEODORE ROOSEVELT "ACTS UPON HIS OWN INITIATIVE":**

**BRINGING THE BELLIGERENTS TO THE PEACE TABLE, 1905**

As the Russo-Japanese struggle raged, Roosevelt channeled his characteristic boldness into promoting his vision of international equilibrium in Europe and Asia. In the words of historian Howard K. Beale, the President "dreamed of...a world in which the imperial powers would live at peace with one another" through mutual recognition of territorial spheres of influence. Jealously guarding their domains against foreign penetration, the imperial powers would mutually check their expansionist tendencies. This understanding among the "civilized" nations of the world would enable them to focus upon the containment and tutelage of the "backward" peoples under their jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> In this context, Roosevelt sought to commit the United States to redressing imbalances which threatened the stability of the world arena. Conversing with the German statesman Hermann von Eckardstein, he asserted that "in fact, we (Americans) are becoming, owing to our strength and geographical situation, more and more the balance of power of the whole globe."<sup>2</sup>

In 1905, Roosevelt seized two opportunities to actuate his conception of America's proper role upon the international stage. On March 31 of that year, Kaiser Wilhelm II delivered an incendiary speech in Tangier in French Morocco, in which he denied the existence of French sovereignty over the North African nation. This gesture, an

attempt by the German monarch to arrest the extension of French power abroad and to test the strength of the embryonic Anglo-French Entente, prompted Roosevelt to persuade Berlin to submit the Moroccan question to international arbitration. After several delays, a conference was finally convened in Algeciras, Spain, in January of 1906. Ultimately, acting on Roosevelt's advice, Germany acknowledged French control of Morocco, in return for a French promise to open its colony to international commerce. The outcome of the Algeciras Conference restored a veneer of stability among the involved European nations, although the episode reinforced Anglo-French ties against Germany.<sup>3</sup>

The war between Russia and Japan provided the second occasion for Roosevelt to realize his country's potential as a guardian of international equilibrium. From the outset of hostilities, Roosevelt, his pro-Japanese sympathies notwithstanding, privately wished for the continued presence of Russia in East Asia to serve as a counterweight against Japanese expansionism. He perceived that Japanese domination of the region could prove as detrimental to American "Open Door" policy objectives as had the Russian domination. As early as March 19, 1904, he expressed in a letter to his friend Cecil Arthur Spring Rice (then the secretary to the British delegation in St. Petersburg) a hopeful supposition

that "the two powers will fight until both are fairly well exhausted, and that then peace will come on terms which will not mean the creation of either a yellow peril or a Slav peril."<sup>4</sup> The astonishing pace of Japanese arms through the succeeding months gradually convinced the President that a rapid cessation of the war was necessary to preserve Russian influence in the contested region. Writing to Whitelaw Reid, the American ambassador to Britain, on June 5, 1905, Roosevelt admitted that he "should be sorry to see Russia driven out of East Asia," and averred that "driven out she will surely be if the war goes on."<sup>5</sup> In sum, he stated to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge on June 16, 1905, "It is best that (Russia) should be left face to face with Japan so that each may have a moderative action on the other."<sup>6</sup>

Equally important to the President was the prevention of another concerted European interference with the eventual peace settlement, akin to that which had compelled Japan to dilute its terms of peace with China in 1895. A similar multilateral intervention between Japan and Russia threatened not only another denial of the fruits of victory to Japan, but also a renewed Western dissection of China. By 1905, Roosevelt believed, the United States had finally acquired a position in East Asia sufficient to prevent such a repetition. Soon after the Russo-Japanese War erupted, Roosevelt warned Paris and Berlin "in the most polite and

discreet fashion" that, in the event of a second European collusion against Japan, the United States would "promptly side with Japan and proceed to whatever length was necessary on her behalf."<sup>7</sup> Japan's victories steeled his resolve to support Japan against any possible European intrusion. In early January of 1905, soon after the fall of Port Arthur, Secretary of State John Hay noted in his diary that Roosevelt "was quite firm in his view that we cannot permit Japan to be robbed a second time of the fruits of her victory."<sup>8</sup>

At an early stage in the war, the President's specific notions of what constituted Japan's legitimate fruits of victory had already begun to crystallize. On June 11, 1904, in conversation with Takahira and Kaneko, Roosevelt opined that Korea and Port Arthur belonged under Japanese hegemony. Though he favored the restoration of Manchuria to China, he was convinced that the moribund Qing government would require Japanese advisors to govern the area efficiently. Lastly, the President championed a Japanese equivalent of the Monroe Doctrine, in which Japanese influence in the Yellow Sea would mirror American influence in the Caribbean Sea. He then hastened to add that he was merely stating his personal views, and not speaking as the President of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

On February 6, 1905, Roosevelt communicated these ideas

in a note to the new American ambassador to Russia, George von Lengerke Meyer: "Japan ought to have a protectorate over Korea (which has shown its utter inability to stand by itself), and ought to succeed to Russia's right in and around Port Arthur, while I should hope to see Manchuria restored to China."<sup>10</sup> When *Collier's* reporter Richard Barry intimated to Roosevelt on February 21 that European intervention might once again threaten Japan's claim to Port Arthur, the President boomed, "Retain Port Arthur! If in no other way, I would *make* (Japan) hold Port Arthur! She has won it, and it is hers, never to be surrendered again. Japan must hold Port Arthur and she must hold Korea. These two points are already settled."<sup>11</sup> Early the next month, Barry, on Roosevelt's instructions, relayed this statement across the Pacific to the journalist George Kennan, a confidant of the President who had close ties with Japanese leaders. He in turn reported Roosevelt's words verbatim to Prime Minister Katsura Taro.<sup>12</sup>

At this time, Japan's leaders were still striving to delineate their terms of peace. Cognizance of Russia's vast material resources, and of Japan's comparative weakness, had made most of them painfully aware of Japan's inability to wrest more than modest terms from its adversary even before the commencement of hostilities. Through the early months of 1905, reports of General Oyama's failure to crush the

Russian army in Manchuria confirmed this sobering reality. As early as August of 1904, Prime Minister Katsura's initial enumeration of Japan's war aims reflected this quest for moderation. He held that the indispensable prerequisites for a durable peace between Russia and Japan were Russian recognition of Japan's "freedom of action" in Korea, cession of the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur to Japan, and the removal of Russian troops from Manchuria. Katsura then listed as optional stipulations the transfer of Sakhalin Island (which Russia had taken from Japan in 1875) back to Japan, the payment to Japan of a war indemnity, and the granting to Japan of full fishing privileges along the Siberian coast.<sup>13</sup>

Others in Tokyo did not share the Prime Minister's advocacy of limited demands, noting the tremendous financial and military burdens which Japan had borne in a war of self-defense provoked by Russian expansionism. In the same month that Katsura drafted his proposed terms, Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō presented his own set of objectives. At the top of his list was the call for an indemnity to reimburse Japan for its wartime expenses, and elsewhere appeared the demand for Sakhalin.<sup>14</sup> Although Katsura's comparatively restrained definition of war objectives prevailed at this early phase of the conflict, Komura privately clung to his agenda.

The following January, London successfully obtained from Tokyo a comprehensive statement of Japanese war aims. Soon after the fall of Port Arthur, British Foreign Minister Lord Henry Lansdowne instructed his ambassador to Japan, Sir Claude MacDonald, to request an enumeration of peace terms from Komura, in the hopes of expediting negotiations between the belligerents. On January 25, 1905, the Japanese Foreign Minister asserted to MacDonald that Tokyo anticipated demanding three "inflexibly required" conditions: cession of Port Arthur and adjacent territory, restoration of the remainder of Manchuria to China, with Japanese control of the railway linking Port Arthur and Harbin, and acknowledgment of Japanese suzerainty over Korea. In addition, Komura indicated that an indemnity and other issues would be discussed with the Russians. After MacDonald commented that the indemnity question could present difficulties, Komura retorted that Russia might choose to pay a small indemnity at that time, instead of a larger one later (against Japan's mounting wartime debts). Komura concluded by proclaiming his government's insistence that St. Petersburg initiate the quest for peace. Upon receiving this information, Lansdowne confidentially sent it to Washington, adding a comment that British leaders did not deem the Japanese terms exorbitant.<sup>15</sup>

Roosevelt reacted to this official statement of Japan's



peace proposals with uncharacteristic doubt. Despite the sanguine remarks about Japan's prospects which he had expressed to Kaneko and Takahira the previous June, the President did not believe that Japan would gain all of Komura's terms. He told Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, the British ambassador to Washington, that Tokyo was demanding more than its armed forces had been able to conquer. To compel Russian submission to the terms, he asserted, the Japanese armies would first have to capture Harbin.<sup>16</sup> The great (albeit inconclusive) armed triumph at Mukden seemingly emboldened Japan's Foreign Minister. On March 31, 1905, Takahira announced to Roosevelt Komura's assertion that Japan could continue fighting for another year, and that the conflict would persist until the Tsar himself sued for peace. The Japanese ambassador then discussed Komura's belief that international precedents entitled Japan to an indemnity, and hinted that the Foreign Minister was also considering the cession of Sakhalin as part of Japan's price for peace.<sup>17</sup>

The President reacted ambivalently to these anticipated demands for money and territory. Although he informed Takahira of his personal hope that Japan would be able to receive financial compensation from Russia for wartime expenses, Roosevelt perhaps recalled that Japan had invested its 1895 indemnity from China in large-scale rearmament. If

Japan were to finance a similar program with an indemnity extracted from Russia, the island nation could prove a serious threat to Roosevelt's vision of the postwar balance of power in East Asia and the Pacific region. The President warned Takahira of probable Russian inability to pay a large indemnity, and suggested that intransigence on this issue might damage Japan's hard-won prestige in the world arena. Given these factors, Roosevelt advised Takahira against seeking an indemnity. Regarding Japanese designs on Sakhalin, the President pointed out that the coveted territory was a sparsely populated island with little intrinsic value, hardly worth the status of a major war objective.<sup>18</sup>

These Japanese demands for payment and territory continued to trouble Roosevelt through the next several weeks. In May of 1905, he wrote to his friend Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, stating that Japan should eschew terms that would induce Russia to continue fighting, rather than accept defeat. Writing to Meyer in the same month, the President averred that, if he were a Russian, he would not submit to conditions that included an indemnity and cession of territory. In conversation with Kaneko in mid-May, Roosevelt reiterated his opinion that Japan should abandon any plans to demand an indemnity and Sakhalin from Russia. When Kaneko cited the precedent occasioned by the French indemnity

payment and cession of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, Roosevelt pointed out that, in 1871, German forces had occupied Paris. In contrast, Japanese forces had not yet occupied Russian territory.<sup>19</sup>

The President mistakenly feared that these demands originated among military leaders intoxicated with their armed success against Russia. Unbeknownst to him, Japan's strategists had been painfully aware that prolonged hostilities would reverse their hard-won gains in Manchuria since March of 1905. Although they had achieved an almost unbroken series of victories in the land war, they knew that Japan lacked the human and material resources to wage a protracted war against the largest nation in the world. They therefore warned their government that Japan was ill able to seek sweeping concessions that would likely steel Russian resolve to continue fighting. Contrary to Roosevelt's belief, Foreign Minister Komura remained the primary agitator for an indemnity and cession of Sakhalin.<sup>20</sup>

Komura's minority position was reinforced on April 21, 1905, when the government leaders in Tokyo officially determined Japan's peace terms. Three conditions were considered "indispensable": freedom of action for Japan in Korea, mutual evacuation of Russian and Japanese military personnel from Manchuria, and cession to Japan of Port Arthur and the railway linking the harbor with Harbin. The

Foreign Minister's preferred demands for an indemnity and the cession of Sakhalin were once again listed as "items not absolutely indispensable."<sup>21</sup>

The government concealed these deliberations on peace terms, as well as the somber reports from army commanders, from the Diet and the Japanese public. Japanese citizens, receiving news of the war through the filter of governmental censorship, believed by the spring of 1905 that the Russian forces in Manchuria were on the verge of collapse, that Oyama was poised for further great victories against them, and that Japan could therefore expect generous concessions from its adversary. Specifically, they anticipated an indemnity by the closing stages of hostilities. Russia had instigated war with its occupation of Manchuria and Port Arthur and its machinations in Korea. Japan therefore deserved reimbursement from Russian coffers for its war of self-defense. Precedents established by previous wars in East Asia further buttressed Japan's claim for reparations. China, defeated in the Opium War (1839-42), the Arrow War (1858-60), the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), and the Boxer Rebellion (1900-01), had paid large sums to its victorious opponents in each case. Having endured high wartime taxes in 1904-05, the Japanese people feared that failure to gain an indemnity from Russia would condemn them to continued onerous financial burdens through the immediate postwar

period. Japan's business leaders observed that Japan would need monetary compensation in order to repay its wartime debts and to underwrite future investments in Korea and Manchuria. Without payment from Russia, they predicted, the Japanese economy, which had enjoyed wartime prosperity, would falter once peace was restored.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, Japanese jingoes formed groups such as the Tairo Doshikai (Anti-Russian Comrades' Society), which agitated for obtainment of an indemnity, Sakhalin, and Russian holdings in Manchuria. These groups also convened mass meetings throughout the country to galvanize the Japanese populace against a "dishonorable" peace.<sup>23</sup> As historian Shumpei Okamoto has observed, "In their desperate determination, a large segment of the Japanese public grew increasingly unrealistic and irrational."<sup>24</sup>

During its deliberations over proposed peace terms, the Japanese government also received considerable pressure from its military leaders and from France to initiate the peacemaking process. Worried by Kaiser Wilhelm II's provocations in French Algeria, Paris began in March of 1905 an attempt to end the Asian war in order to restore the Russian counterweight to German ambitions in Europe and Africa. In mid-March, seeking to coerce Russia to sue for peace, French bankers in St. Petersburg abruptly cancelled their plans to extend another war loan to the Russian

government.<sup>25</sup> This maneuver prodded Tsar Nicholas II to take a tentative step toward negotiation with Japan. On March 21, the Russian monarch instructed his ambassador to Paris, Alexander Nelidov, to communicate with the Japanese through French Foreign Minister Theophile Delcasse. On April 5, Delcasse informed Japan's ambassador Motono Ichiro of his belief that Russia would agree to commence peace negotiations, provided that Japan would foreswear designs on Russian territory and demands for an indemnity. After Motono cabled Tokyo with this information, Komura gave a lukewarm response. The Japanese Foreign Minister argued that, despite the nearly unbroken series of Russian military defeats, St. Petersburg was attempting to dictate the parameters of a peace conference.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the Japanese government remained wary of accepting the good offices of a Russian ally, especially when French territories in Africa and Asia were then supplying Russia's Baltic Fleet with coal and other provisions as it crawled eastward.<sup>27</sup> (In mid-April, Admiral Rozhdestvenski's ill-fated armada would stagger into Camranh Bay in French Indochina.<sup>28</sup>)

This external pressure to begin the quest for peace sparked heated debate among government leaders in Tokyo. At a deadlocked conference on April 8, the senior members of the *Genro* advocated initiating the call for negotiations. They cautioned that continuation of the war not only would

threaten to reverse the tide of battle in Manchuria, but also would exacerbate Japan's foreign debt. In contrast, Katsura and Komura adamantly insisted that Russia should be the first to request an end to hostilities. They contended that Russia would perceive a Japanese overture as a sign of weakness. Cognizant that the Baltic Fleet was then inching its way toward the war zone, the two ministers also did not wish to project abroad the impression that it intimidated Japan. After more than a week of dissension, the *Genro* finally overruled Katsura and Komura on April 17. On that day, Tokyo decided to send confidential hints to Washington to indicate Japan's readiness to open negotiations with Russia.<sup>29</sup>

Japanese plans to turn to the United States to request arbitration at an opportune juncture in the war antedated the outbreak of hostilities in February of 1904. Europe's extensive alliance system, which included both Russia and Japan by 1904, would likely prejudice a potential European mediator. France's abortive attempt to intercede in April of 1905 confirmed this belief. Also, memories of the 1895 Triple Intervention by France, Germany, and Russia on China's behalf during the Shimonoseki Conference continued to rankle Japan's leaders. The United States, isolated from the vagaries of European diplomacy, appeared best suited for the role of an impartial arbiter. For this reason, Tokyo had

dispatched Kaneko to Washington early in the war as a special emissary to plead Japan's case to the American people, and to cultivate support for Japan among American leaders.<sup>30</sup>

Immediately after electing to request American mediation, Tokyo began to send subtle signals to Washington. On April 18, Takahira discussed Japan's recent rejection of Delcasse's overture with Secretary of War William Howard Taft, and asked him to apprise Roosevelt. Taft then sent a confidential telegram to the President, stating that although Japan had refused the French offer, it "had no intention to close the door to friendly offices exerted purely for the purpose of bringing the belligerents together." Indeed, Japanese leaders judged that "it (was) not unlikely that the friendly good offices of some Power might be necessary." In reply, Roosevelt accepted the Japanese position that "negotiations should be directly between Russia and Japan, and should include all the possible terms of peace," and added as a proviso his assumption that "Japan (was) adhering to her position of maintaining the Open Door in Manchuria and restoring it to China."<sup>31</sup> In a separate, private letter to Taft, Roosevelt explained that his endorsement of direct negotiations on all terms of peace did not imply his approval of Japan's demands for an indemnity or cession of territory. Instead, the



President remained noncommittal on these points.<sup>32</sup>

Tokyo readily acceded to Roosevelt's injunction regarding Manchuria on April 25. In a message announcing his government's agreement with the President, Komura further solicited advice from the American leader on the best means by which Japan could "pave the way" for negotiations with Russia. Simultaneously, Ambassador Lloyd Griscom cabled Washington from Tokyo, describing Japan's eagerness for peace, and asserting that its leaders sought Roosevelt's assistance in effecting a settlement with Russia. Somewhat taken aback by these signs of Japanese war-weariness, the President informed Taft on April 27 that he was "a good deal puzzled" by these reports, but urged Taft to arrange "an absolutely frank talk" between Takahira and Count Arthur Cassini, the Russian ambassador in Washington.<sup>33</sup>

Komura immediately balked at this suggestion from the President, refusing to open such crucial discussions with "a man of Cassini's known character."<sup>34</sup> Instead, the Japanese Foreign Minister continued to appeal to Roosevelt personally. On May 13, 1905, Takahira finally approached him with a direct request for assistance from Tokyo. Komura asked Roosevelt if he believed the time was ripe for commencing peace negotiations, and further inquired whether he "would be so kind as to go to the trouble of bringing the two nations together for a meeting on his own initiative" if

he judged a rapid end to the war to be necessary. The Japanese Foreign Minister hastened to add that his nation was not seeking the President's advice from a position of weakness, asserting that Japan was "in the best possible position" financially and militarily.<sup>35</sup> In response, Roosevelt reminded Takahira of Russia's persistent unwillingness to accept defeat, as evidenced by the slow approach of its Baltic Fleet, which was then preparing to embark from Camranh Bay upon the final leg of its voyage to Vladivostok.<sup>36</sup> The President counseled Takahira that Russia would interpret an overture from Tokyo at that juncture as evidence that Admiral Rozhdestvenski's decrepit armada intimidated Japan. He concluded by averring that Japan should defer further peace initiatives until after its navy had dealt with the Russian fleet.<sup>37</sup>

Exactly two weeks later, on May 27-28, Admiral Togo smashed the Baltic Fleet in the Straits of Tsushima. This resounding triumph convinced both Tokyo and Washington that an opportune moment to commence peace negotiations had at last arrived. On May 31, Komura cabled Takahira with confidential instructions to request Roosevelt's assistance in arranging a conference with Russia. Still anxious to conceal from Russian knowledge the fervent Japanese desire for peace, Tokyo indicated that the President should invite the two belligerents to commence negotiations "directly and

entirely of his own initiative." On the next day, June 1, Takahira formally presented this message to Roosevelt. Though the President willingly accepted this task, he feared that Japan's proposed demands for an indemnity and cession of territory threatened to sabotage prospects for a successful conference. Roosevelt repeated his warning to Takahira of probable Russian unwillingness to pay war reparations. Tokyo's invocation of the precedent of the 1871 French indemnity to Germany, he asserted, "might be reasonable if the Japanese armies were surrounding Moscow." Instead, the President suggested that, if Japan were to abandon its financial designs and accept a partition of Sakhalin, Russia would agree to ending the war.<sup>38</sup>

Since the beginning of 1905, Roosevelt himself had been striving to persuade Russia to sue for peace before the Japanese military onslaught undermined his vision of the postwar balance of power in East Asia. As early as December of 1904, he had resolved to replace Robert McCormick, the American ambassador to St. Petersburg, with the more adept George von Lengerke Meyer. Writing to Meyer on December 26, he characterized that position as "the most important post in the diplomatic service from the standpoint of work to be done."<sup>39</sup> The fall of Port Arthur and the eruption of revolution against the Tsarist regime the following January underscored the urgency of preventing further bloodshed in

Manchuria, and Meyer presented his credentials to Russian Foreign Minister Vladimir Lamsdorff in February.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, Roosevelt prevailed upon *Chicago Tribune* correspondent John Callan O'Laughlin, who had close ties with the Russian embassy in Washington, to inform Cassini of his conviction that, unless Russia could maintain six hundred thousand men in Manchuria and achieve success with its Baltic Fleet, it should make peace with Japan. Simultaneously, the President gave the same statement to Jules Jusserand, the French ambassador to the United States, in the hopes that France could influence its Russian ally. Neither initiative brought results. Though he strongly wished for peace, French Foreign Minister Delcasse declined to advise the Russian government, worried that Russia would blame France for an unfavorable peace settlement. Rather, Delcasse urged Roosevelt to persuade Japan to begin the peacemaking process on moderate terms. Upon hearing rumors about Japan's possible demands for money and territory, Cassini defiantly told O'Laughlin that only a nation with two remaining soldiers, and those in retreat, would submit to such conditions. Russia still had a massive army in Manchuria and the Baltic Fleet. His nation, Cassini declared, was not yet beaten.<sup>41</sup>

The subsequent defeat at Mukden and the suspension of wartime loans from French bankers failed to dampen Russian

resolve. A conference between Roosevelt and Cassini in late March revealed that the attitude of the Russian ambassador had not changed. When the President attempted to convince Cassini that peace served the national interests of both Russia and the United States, which did not wish to witness the elimination of Russian influence in East Asia, the Russian argued that his nation would never pay an indemnity or surrender territory to obtain peace. Roosevelt queried about the course Russia would take if Vladivostok and Harbin were to fall to the Japanese army. In reply, Cassini claimed that Japan could ill afford extended operations in Manchuria. Unaware at the time of the exhaustion of Oyama's forces, Roosevelt shot back that Russian persistence derived from a "dangerous delusion."<sup>42</sup>

Meyer fared little better in St. Petersburg. Tsar Nicholas II had quickly lost interest in the secret attempt to approach Japan through France which he had undertaken in late March of 1905. He soon received external encouragement to persevere. Alarmed by the revolutionary tensions convulsing Russia, German Chancellor Bernhard furst von Bulow believed that an unfavorable peace settlement would exacerbate the unrest, potentially jeopardizing not only the Russian monarchy, but also the other monarchies on the European continent. In April of 1905, Bulow sent Wilhelm II's brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, to St. Petersburg to

assure the Tsar that time was on the side of the Russian forces in Manchuria. Prince Henry brought with him a report from the German General Staff which stated that Sakhalin and Vladivostok lay within Japan's reach, but that the Japanese advance would eventually ebb in the vast Siberian wasteland, where Oyama's armies could only languish at a ruinous cost to Japan. As a result, the German assessment concluded, Japan could not coerce Russia to sue for peace. His resolve steeled, Nicholas II then saw the Baltic Fleet as the instrument for reversing the tide of war. Triumphantly, Prince Henry telegraphed Berlin, "Tsar determined to continue war in spite of strong agitation for peace. He pins his whole hopes on Rozhdestvenski...Tsar in calm and normal spirits." Meyer glumly commented in his diary that there was no hope for peace until after an engagement between the Japanese navy and the Baltic Fleet.<sup>43</sup> An exasperated Roosevelt fumed in a May 13 letter to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, "I loathe the Russian system of government...Just at the moment, Russia is riding a high horse and will not talk peace."<sup>44</sup>

The near annihilation of Rozhdestvenski's armada finally undermined the Tsar's determination to prolong hostilities. Dazed, he recorded in his diary "the awful news about the destruction of almost the entire squadron." British ambassador Sir Charles Hardinge noted that the naval

battle had at last awakened the denizens of the Russian capital to the horrors of the distant war, since many of the officers commanding the doomed vessels had come from the nation's elite families. Meyer cabled to Washington his impression that the destruction of the Baltic Fleet had "really moved" St. Petersburg for the first time in the conflict.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, by the beginning of June, the Tsar dimly recognized the gravity of the domestic turbulence afflicting Russia, which had escalated dramatically since the "Bloody Sunday" massacre of January 22, 1905. Widespread strikes led by workers and students had paralyzed Russian industry and closed Russian schools. In May of 1905, political liberals had joined forces in a Union of Unions, which vehemently demanded the creation of a legislative assembly in the Russian government. People of various nationalities subsumed under the Russian Empire, such as the Poles, Finns, and Ukrainians, clamored for autonomy. The climax of the national upheaval occurred in late June of 1905, when Russian sailors aboard the battleship *Potemkin*, stationed at the Black Sea port of Odessa, mutinied and sailed for Rumania.<sup>46</sup> Further defeats in the war with Japan would likely exacerbate this unrest.

Observing these tumultuous events from Berlin, a dismayed Kaiser Wilhelm II reached a conclusion which

opposed that of his Chancellor. Conferring with American ambassador Charlemagne Tower, the German emperor remarked, "Unless peace is made, they will kill the Tsar," and added that the assassination of Nicholas II would endanger all European monarchs. On June 3, 1905, Wilhelm II urged his cousin "Nicky" to seek peace, contending that hopes for a reversal of the military tide had died with the Baltic Fleet. He strongly advised the Tsar to accept American good offices, averring that "if anybody in the world is able to influence the Japanese or induce them to be reasonable in their proposals, it is President Roosevelt." On the same day, the Kaiser sent a message to Roosevelt in which he offered his assistance in any efforts the President made on behalf of peace.<sup>47</sup> Though he appreciated the German leader's support, Roosevelt was troubled by Berlin's supposition that he would persuade Japan to dilute its peace terms. In a private note to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge on June 5, the President described the German overture, commenting that he "did not desire to be asked to squeeze terms out of Japan favorable to Russia."<sup>48</sup>

Instead, urging the Tsar to accept a peace conference on June 5, Roosevelt disavowed any intention of influencing Japan: "The President believes it would be better for the representatives of the two powers to discuss the whole peace question themselves, rather than for any outside power to do



more than arrange the meeting." His entreaty also honored Japan's fervent desire to maintain the secrecy of its initial request for American intercession: "If Russia will consent to such a meeting, the President will try to get Japan's consent, acting simply on his own initiative."<sup>49</sup> To Lodge, Roosevelt confided his doubts as to whether this message to St. Petersburg would persuade the Russian government: "I do not believe there is much chance of this bringing about peace, for I suppose the Tsar, who seems in a thoroughly Chinese mood, will refuse to do anything. If he does, then all I can say is that his blood must be on his own head...In any event, I have done what I could to help on toward peace."<sup>50</sup>

Fortunately, Roosevelt's pessimism proved unfounded. On June 7, Meyer presented Roosevelt's appeal to the Russian monarch at Tsarskoe Selo. During an hour-long audience, the American ambassador indicated that he had informed Washington that Russia was not desperate for peace at any price, and that excessive Japanese demands would rally the Russian people behind the Tsar. Also, Meyer reassured Nicholas II of the purity of Roosevelt's motives in calling for a peace conference. In return, the Tsar informed Meyer of his acceptance of the President's invitation, provided that Russian approval remain confidential until Japan likewise acceded. Nicholas II then added that Meyer had

arrived at "a psychological moment," in which the Russian ruler realized that Russian land, particularly Sakhalin, lay vulnerable to further Japanese advances which could occur at any time.<sup>51</sup>

On the evening of June 7, Roosevelt learned of the Tsar's capitulation. The following day, he drafted a formal invitation for the belligerents to enter into negotiations, and sent it to Tokyo and St. Petersburg.<sup>52</sup> The Japanese government's acceptance of the President's overture elicited mixed reactions from among the Japanese public. Though American ambassador Lloyd Griscom later recalled that "an aura of peace was in the air,"<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt's invitation was a "bolt out of the blue" for many of Japan's citizens. Still oblivious of the increasingly tenuous position of Oyama's forces, they confidently expected further armed triumphs, and believed that only the destruction of the Russian army could guarantee a durable peace in Manchuria. Consequently, they judged Roosevelt's intercession premature. Eventual acquiescence in governmental policy did not quell lingering doubts concerning Japan's chances for successful negotiations with Russia. Optimists stated in the Japanese press their belief that Russia had requested peace negotiations through the United States, and that Roosevelt and the Japanese government had reviewed and approved Russian terms prior to Tokyo's acceptance of American good

offices. Less sanguine journalists held that Roosevelt's invitation had actually derived from his own initiative, rather than Russian desperation, and that the coming peace conference would therefore not necessarily secure an "honorable peace" for Japan. Further, they reminded their readers of the ignominious outcome of the 1895 Shimonoseki Conference, and gloomily predicted another failure in Japanese diplomacy.<sup>54</sup>

Russia's response to Roosevelt's overture created more immediate problems. Foreign Minister Vladimir Lamsdorff neglected to inform Cassini of the Tsar's assent to a conference, thereby causing several days of confusion in Washington in which the Russian ambassador insisted that Meyer had misconstrued Nicholas II. Meanwhile, in St. Petersburg, the Russian Foreign Minister blustered to British ambassador Hardinge that only humanitarian principles had compelled the Tsar to accept Roosevelt's initiative, and that, in the absence of a public Japanese call for peace, Russia was prepared to fight indefinitely. Though Roosevelt received verbal assurances from Cassini that Russia recognized the need for peace, Lamsdorff sent a warning that Russia would "in no case accept conditions that (did) not correspond to its national honor."<sup>55</sup>

This signal from St. Petersburg renewed Roosevelt's concerns regarding Japan's peace terms. On June 8, the day

on which he issued the invitations to the belligerent capitals, he had told Kaneko that that he now supported Japanese claims on Sakhalin, but remained opposed to the quest for an indemnity. The President emphasized his fear that Japanese insistence upon reparations would sabotage the coming conference, and added that Russia's financial disarray precluded its ability to compensate Japan's wartime expenses. Roosevelt's efforts to enlist British aid in persuading Japan to pursue more moderate demands proved fruitless. Foreign Minister Lord Henry Lansdowne believed Japan entitled to a substantial indemnity, despite Hardinge's assessment on June 13 that Japan had little hope of obtaining more than either a small payment or a territorial cession instead of money from a nation that was "still as arrogant as ever." In response, Lansdowne exclaimed to Hardinge, "Is there any case of a war of this kind in which the losing side has not had to pay for its folly or ill luck?"<sup>56</sup>

Having accepted the President's invitation to discuss peace, the belligerent governments, acting on his advice, selected the Portsmouth Navy Yard, near Portsmouth, New Hampshire, as the site for the upcoming conference.<sup>57</sup> Choosing conferees presented a more formidable task. At first, Prime Minister Katsura nominated Marquis Ito Hirobumi to lead the Japanese delegation. In a meeting of the *Genro*

and other leaders, Katsura asserted that the chief negotiator for Japan needed to be a member of the *Genro* who had the complete trust of the Emperor and the support of the people. To the Emperor, the Prime Minister recommended Ito as the chief and Komura as the second-ranking plenipotentiaries. Across the Pacific, Roosevelt also hoped Ito would head the Japanese peacemakers, believing that he would exert a moderating influence upon his colleagues.<sup>58</sup> Japan's senior statesman, however, declined. The Emperor had relied heavily upon his counsel throughout the conflict, and did not want him to leave Tokyo. Ito himself, who had opposed Japan's drift toward war with Russia, believed that the leaders responsible for instigating hostilities should face the task of ending them. On one occasion, he stated, "One must harvest the result of what one has sown. I started the Sino-Japanese War, and therefore I naturally concluded it. I consider it in order that the present war be concluded by Katsura himself."<sup>59</sup>

Most importantly, Japan's leaders were already beginning to realize that the peace settlement would in all likelihood fall far short of public expectations. Lancelot Lawton, wartime correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, commented, "It was evident that the position of the Japanese plenipotentiary was to be compared to that of a poker player possessing an extremely doubtful hand."<sup>60</sup> Ito perceived

that, if he were to lead the peacemaking mission, he would return home bearing the blame for its failure to obtain satisfactory terms, and would alone confront the popular wrath of Japan. His well-known prewar advocacy of accommodation with Russia would render him especially vulnerable to charges of leniency toward the enemy.<sup>61</sup>

After Ito refused to travel to Portsmouth, the *Genro* then selected Foreign Minister Komura to lead Japan's delegation. Ambassador Takahira would serve as the secondary plenipotentiary. *Genro* members were extremely ambivalent about appointing the headstrong Komura as Japan's chief diplomat for the difficult negotiations ahead. Worried that the Foreign Minister's fixation upon expansive terms would jeopardize the conference, Navy Minister Yamamoto Gonnohyoe sought reassurance from Komura during the *Genro*'s discussion of Japan's delegation: "It is our understanding that, if the negotiations come to the point of rupture, you will make the final decision only after you have obtained governmental instructions. We would like to obtain your assurance on this point for the sake of our peace of mind." Only after Komura answered, "Of course!" did the *Genro* finally decide to elect him to head the peace mission.<sup>62</sup> To assist himself and Takahira, however, Komura chose several individuals who shared his hard-line views, including Honda Kumataro, his private secretary, and Colonel Tachibana Kaichiro, military

advisor to the peace mission.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, a cabinet meeting on June 30 drafted the final instructions to Japan's delegation. Once again, the proposed peace terms reflected Japan's need to end the war quickly. Three conditions were deemed "absolutely indispensable to achieving our war aims and guaranteeing the security of our Imperial nation forever": Russian acknowledgment of Japanese freedom of action in Korea, mutual withdrawal of troops from Manchuria, and cession of the portion of the Liaodong Peninsula which Russia had leased from China, as well as the railway linking Port Arthur and Harbin. Four conditions were considered "relatively important," to be pursued "insofar as circumstances permit": Russian reimbursement of Japan's wartime expenses, the surrender to Japan of all Russian warships that had sought refuge in neutral harbors, cession of Sakhalin, and fishing rights along the coast of the Maritime Provinces. Finally, two additional items were to be used as bargaining points: future limitation of Russian naval strength in the Far East, and conversion of Vladivostok into a purely commercial port. This list of conditions received Imperial sanction on July 5. The Japanese delegation was to treat these instructions as guidelines, rather than rigid demands. Komura would later fully exploit this freedom of discretion, revising the terms

to conform to his own agenda.<sup>64</sup>

The Russian search for emissaries proved even more difficult. Initially, Nicholas II strove to avoid selecting the able but unpopular Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Sergei Witte. Though Witte had once ardently advocated Russian commercial expansion in East Asia during his service as Russia's Minister of Finance, the rise of Japanese power in the years following the Sino-Japanese War had eventually tempered his Asian ambitions. One of the few Russian leaders who had opposed war with Japan in 1904, Witte had striven to restore peace at an early stage in the conflict. During the summer of 1904, he had attempted to open peace negotiations through the Japanese ambassador to Britain, Count Hayashi Tadasu. Outraged by this gesture, the Tsar had immediately quashed it. In late February of 1905, worried that the military debacle in Manchuria fueled the flames of revolution, Witte submitted a written plea to Nicholas II urging the commencement of negotiations. Warning that continuation of the conflict would spell economic and financial ruin for Russia, Witte vainly admonished the monarch, "In all things decision is requisite. But if decision is indispensable in happiness, it is doubly necessary in disaster. In disaster, resolution is the first step towards safety. There should be no delay. Peace pourparlers should at once be begun."<sup>65</sup> Though Witte



believed that his bold letter wrought a profound influence upon the Tsar, he was mistaken.

Having ignored Witte's advice during the war, Nicholas II was now unwilling to entrust him with the responsibility of negotiating peace. Foreign Minister Lamsdorff, who perceived the value of Witte's expertise on economic and financial issues, strongly advocated the appointment of Witte to the peace mission in his first recommendation to the Tsar on June 24, 1905. After other candidates refused to assume the unwelcome task of negotiating the conclusion of a lost war, the Tsar finally offered it to Witte. Although he accepted the assignment in order to serve his country and his own personal ambitions, Witte acidly grumbled to Finance Minister Vladimir Kokovtsov, "When a sewer has to be cleaned, they send Witte; but as soon as work of a cleaner and nicer kind appears, plenty of other candidates spring up."<sup>66</sup> Also at the head of the Russian delegation was Baron Roman Rosen, Russia's prewar ambassador to Japan and Cassini's designated successor in Washington.<sup>67</sup>

The day after he accepted the task of leading the Russian mission to Portsmouth, Witte conferred with the Tsar. Although Nicholas II affirmed his hopes for peace, he emphasized his refusal to pay a kopek of indemnity or to cede an inch of territory. The Tsar subsequently gave Witte additional instructions designed to lay the foundations of

an amicable postwar relationship between the two belligerents that would also preserve intact Russian interests in East Asia.<sup>68</sup>

The final guidelines which Witte received on July 11 reflected St. Petersburg's persistent conviction that Japan had not won the war in Manchuria. His agenda opened with a reaffirmation of Russian readiness to continue hostilities should Japanese terms affront Russia's national honor. Next, it enumerated the conditions to which Russia would not submit: cession of territory, payment of reparations, disarmament of Vladivostok, future restriction of Russian naval strength in the Pacific, and cession of the railway line to Vladivostok. Although this report acknowledged Russia's loss of control over Port Arthur, it stipulated that Japanese acquisition of the harbor was to be subject to China's approval, since Russia had originally leased it from Beijing. The railway from Port Arthur was to be sold to China. The official Russian position on Korea was contradictory. Though it stated that Russia would recognize Japanese supremacy in the peninsula, it demanded that Japan recognize Korea's full independence and refrain from bringing troops into Korea and fortifying the Korean-Manchurian border.<sup>69</sup>

Although Witte concurred with these proposals, he disagreed with the Tsar's belief in Russian ability to

continue the war. Russia's urgent need for peace was soon underscored in mid-July by a sobering report from Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, who had recently presided over a somber conference of Russia's military leaders. The Grand Duke stated that Linievich's forces, with reinforcements, could eventually drive Oyama's armies back to Port Arthur and the Korean border. Unfortunately, it was estimated that such an endeavor would require another year of hostilities, and would cost Russia one billion rubles and as many as 500,000 casualties.<sup>70</sup> Witte knew that wartime inflation had already doubled the supply of rubles in circulation; prolongation of the war therefore invited financial collapse.<sup>71</sup> Though Witte asserted to the Associated Press that Russia would not seek peace at any price, such posturing was largely for the sake of appearances. The Grand Duke's alarming assessment reinforced Witte's determination to restore peace.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time, Russia's growing monetary instability also impelled Witte to oppose paying reparations to Japan. In mid-July of 1905, he travelled to Paris in search of further French loans to Russia. He discovered that France was willing to help Russia pay an indemnity to Japan, but refused to finance a continuation of hostilities. Prime Minister Maurice Rouvier advised that Russia needed peace, even if Japan's terms included a demand for reparations. He reminded Witte that the indemnity France had paid to Germany

in 1871 had not tarnished French national dignity. Witte retorted that Russia might reconsider its position on the indemnity issue when the Japanese armies surrounded Moscow. Anxious to learn Japan's terms, Witte then consulted Robert McCormick, now the American ambassador to France. Likewise uncertain of the nature of Japan's agenda, McCormick mentioned an article in the *North American Review* which predicted a Japanese demand for an indemnity. Witte warned that, should Japan's envoys prove insistent upon this issue, "(his) stay in the United States will be short."<sup>73</sup>

Such statements from Witte exacerbated Roosevelt's fears that the conference would end in failure. In a letter to Spring Rice on July 24, the President fumed about "the monstrous ineptitude" of "the amorphous body which in Russia stands as the Government," and opined that "Witte has talked like a fool since he was appointed."<sup>74</sup> Five days later, he wrote to Whitelaw Reid, the American ambassador to Britain, "...if the Russians play the fool to the extent that Witte's published statements would imply, the Japs will have to go on with the war and the Russians will thoroughly deserve the additional disasters which they will encounter...If (the Russians) persistently refuse to see any light, all we can do is to shrug our shoulders and let them go on to their fate."<sup>75</sup> Ambassador Griscom in Tokyo received Roosevelt's bleakest estimation on July 27: "Before you

receive this, the peace negotiations I suppose will have come to an end, and I rather think they will end in failure."<sup>76</sup>

In response, the President redoubled his efforts to persuade the Japanese to abandon the terms which jeopardized the conference, but to little avail. The British government remained aloof, maintaining that for London to urge moderation upon Tokyo would break the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Frustrated, Roosevelt asked Spring Rice why it was proper for France to urge peace upon Russia, but improper for Britain to follow suit with Japan. Privately, the President even began to wonder whether London was encouraging Japanese ambitions.<sup>77</sup> Further discussions with Kaneko were equally fruitless. Unable to move his former Harvard classmate, Roosevelt finally recommended that Japan first obtain Russian agreement on the basic idea of reparations without revealing an amount. If successful on this point, the Japanese negotiators could then discuss the size of the payment to be made.<sup>78</sup>

Shortly thereafter, an opportunity to urge flexibility upon St. Petersburg emerged. To Russia's chagrin, Japan had refused to agree to an armistice prior to the conference. Consequently, the Tsar worried about a possible Japanese seizure of Russian territory before negotiations began. On July 7, his fears were realized as Japanese forces invaded

Sakhalin Island. By the end of the month, the entire island was under Japanese control.<sup>79</sup> Foreign observers quickly perceived that the possession of this Russian territory greatly strengthened Japan's hand for the coming conference. The *New York Times* correspondent in the Russian capital commented, "the control of Sakhalin puts a powerful lever in the possession of Japanese diplomacy, which finally has something tangible in its hands to throw upon the scales with the sword in the coming conference." In fact, he asserted, "Japan has now in her hands enough trumps to take the game."<sup>80</sup>

Attempting at the time to induce the Japanese to dilute their peace terms, Roosevelt discerned in the fall of Sakhalin an opportunity to soften the Russian position, as well. Through Meyer, he bluntly told Lamsdorff that Russia had no hope of victory, and that a reasonable indemnity and cession of Sakhalin were small prices to pay for peace, in comparison with what Japan would eventually demand if Russia persisted. According to the President, Russian unwillingness to admit defeat would result in the irretrievable loss of Eastern Siberia.<sup>81</sup> To Roosevelt's dismay, his warning failed to induce St. Petersburg to muzzle Witte.

During these efforts to foster harmonious negotiations between the belligerents, the President also prepared Washington's official recognition of Japanese military

supremacy in East Asia. Already, he had accepted Japan's refusal to allow Chinese participation in the peace conference.<sup>82</sup> Specifically, however, Roosevelt's attention focused upon Korea, under Japanese control since February of 1904. As early as June of 1904, he had accepted Japan's domination of the peninsula as part of the postwar order. The lack of American strength in the region, coupled with a pro-Japanese trend in American public opinion (which he shared), impelled his acquiescence. American possession of the Philippines also imposed limitations on Washington's East Asian policy. The destruction of Russia's Baltic Fleet in May of 1905 established Japan as the primary naval power in the western Pacific Ocean. Painfully aware of the tenuousness of the American grasp on the Philippine archipelago, Roosevelt sought to avoid confrontation between the United States and Japan, and to direct the focus of Japanese expansion toward the Asian continent (to the extent dictated by his vision of the postwar balance of power between Russia and Japan). In the summer of 1905, propaganda from the few Americans who had supported Russia during the war predicted eventual Japanese aggression against the Philippine islands. Though he doubtless placed little credence in such alarmism, Roosevelt nevertheless desired a formal understanding with Japan which would clarify the relationship between the empires of the two nations.<sup>83</sup>

Accordingly, in late July of 1905, the Rough Rider sent Secretary of War William Howard Taft on a confidential mission to Tokyo to formalize a Japanese-American *modus vivendi*. On July 27, Taft met with Prime Minister Katsura. Following a lengthy discussion, the two statesmen drafted an "agreed memorandum of conversation," in which the United States recognized the Japanese protectorate over Korea and Japan disavowed any designs on the Philippines. The Taft-Katsura Agreement did not embody a *quid pro quo* arrangement between the United States and Japan. Rather, it expressed in writing an exchange of views in which Taft reaffirmed American acceptance of Japanese suzerainty over Korea, and Katsura dispelled the rhetoric of the pro-Russian minority in the United States.<sup>84</sup> Still, as historian John Wilz has observed, the accord "put an American seal on the death warrant of an independent Korea."<sup>85</sup>

As Taft and Katsura framed this agreement, the Japanese peace delegation arrived in the United States. Komura and his entourage had left the port city of Yokohama on July 8 amid great fanfare. With shouts of "Banzai!", over five thousand Japanese citizens had gathered at the port to bid farewell to the delegation that would end a glorious war with an honorable peace. Komura sadly joked to one of his subordinates, "When I return, these people will turn into unruly mobs that will attack me with mud pies or pistols. So



I had better enjoy their 'Banzai' now."<sup>86</sup> Arriving in New York City in late July, Komura immediately consulted Kaneko. The Foreign Minister confided that, though Tokyo had advocated lenient terms, he would press the demands for an indemnity and Sakhalin. Aware that his position would create difficulties in the conference, Komura instructed Kaneko to secure an arrangement with Roosevelt whereby the President would intervene in the event of an impending rupture.<sup>87</sup>

Two days later, Komura and Takahira visited Roosevelt at his summer home, Sagamore Hill, in Oyster Bay, Long Island. The Foreign Minister gave the President a list of Japan's peace terms which did not differentiate between those which Tokyo had judged essential and optional. In response, Roosevelt first recommended that Japan withdraw its demands for the disarmament of Vladivostok and the surrender of interned Russian warships. Then, he focused once again on the indemnity issue. Informing Komura of Witte's bold statements in Paris, Roosevelt said that he would endeavor to soften Witte's position, but warned that Japanese insistence upon this point could prove fatal to the negotiations. Prolongation of hostilities might yield further armed victories for Japan, but would not make the obtainment of reparations any easier. After this meeting, Komura concluded that Roosevelt wanted Japan to reduce its demand for payment to "a very low sum." When the President

subsequently intimated to Kaneko that Russia might be persuaded to pay a small amount of money if it was not designated as an indemnity, Kaneko pointed out the Japanese public's clamor for a large indemnity, and added that Japan's postwar financial stability depended upon reparations from Russia. In short, asserted Kaneko, a sizable indemnity was "absolutely necessary."<sup>88</sup>

Roosevelt's fears that Witte would prove inflexible were largely unfounded. His bombastic speeches in Paris notwithstanding, Russia's chief negotiator recognized his nation's need for peace. Though given strict guidelines by a government that still refused to concede defeat, Witte was privately willing to transcend his instructions in order to end the catastrophic war. In fact, according to Rosen's later recollection, Witte was prepared to surrender Sakhalin and pay an indemnity, "provided it could be accomplished under some plausible disguise" by the time he arrived in New York City on August 2.<sup>89</sup> Rosen himself, who had replaced Cassini as the Russian ambassador to the United States in early July, more closely represented the views of the Tsar. Prior to Witte's arrival, Rosen visited Roosevelt at Sagamore Hill, and "ventured to controvert the view the President seemed to entertain as to the precarious character of our position and the consequent necessity for us to conclude peace at any sacrifice." He informed the President

that two corps of Russia's best troops, usually stationed in the western part of the country, were then travelling eastward to the war zone. Furthermore, he reminded the Rough Rider, Oyama's forces had not advanced since their victory at Mukden the previous March. These contentions, however, failed to impress Roosevelt.<sup>90</sup>

Soon after Witte's arrival in the United States, the two Russian diplomats discussed Nicholas II's prohibitions against ceding territory and paying an indemnity. Since Sakhalin was under Japanese control by that time, Witte and Rosen concurred "that the presence of irremediable facts and conditions" necessitated compromise on the first point.<sup>91</sup> Initially, the two were divided over the indemnity question. Whereas Witte favored a payment to Japan to secure peace, Rosen was not convinced that the success of the coming conference depended upon Russian capitulation on this issue. Rosen asserted his belief that Japan needed peace more desperately than Russia. Indeed, he suspected that Tokyo had secretly requested Roosevelt's intercession.<sup>92</sup> Lastly, the two men at first differed on whether the time was ripe for peace, in light of Russia's domestic turmoil. Whereas Witte held that immediate cessation of the war would ease political tensions, Rosen contended that "the conclusion of peace after a series of defeats without our Army being given a chance to redeem the glory of our arms by victory" would

exacerbate the unrest.<sup>93</sup> Both concluded, however, that this last issue was academic, "as it concerned a question that had already been settled by a higher power in a sense to which our very presence at Portsmouth bore witness."<sup>94</sup>

Witte and Rosen soon reconciled their differing views on the remaining points of contention, "which enabled (them) to conduct the negotiations as if (they) had been one man with one mind, one will, and one heart beating for (their) country."<sup>95</sup> During his first audience with Roosevelt on August 4, Witte reiterated the official, hard-line Russian position, vowing that, should Japan reject Russia's terms, the Russian forces would "conduct a defensive war to the last extreme, and we will see who will last the longest." Alienated by Witte's brusque manner and dismayed by his intransigence, Roosevelt later gloomily wrote to Senator Lodge, "I do not think the Russians mean peace."<sup>96</sup> On the outcome of the approaching conference rested the fate of the President's prestige and foreign policy objectives in East Asia, as well as that of the combatants.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER II

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3. Beale, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America*, pp. 308-331.
4. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, IV*, p. 760.
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16. Ibid., p. 27.
17. Ibid., p. 28.
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29. Okamoto, *Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 116-117.

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33. Dennett, *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 180-181.
34. Ibid., p. 182.
35. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 34.
36. Warner, *Tide at Sunrise*, p. 493.
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43. Ibid., p. 30.

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### CHAPTER III:

"THE BITTEREST DOSE JAPAN HAS EVER BEEN COMPELLED TO TAKE":

REACHING AN ILLUSORY PEACE AT PORTSMOUTH, 1905

On August 9, 1905, Komura and his colleagues drafted a revised version of Japan's terms. Once again, Tokyo's distinction between required and optional conditions was discarded; instead, the proposals were listed in random order. Following Roosevelt's advice, they deleted the word "indemnity" from their terms, replacing it with a demand that Russia reimburse Japan for "the actual expenses of the war." Another sign of the President's influence was the omission of the call for demilitarization of Vladivostok. When Komura submitted the new list of demands to the Russians during the first formal session on August 10, he characterized it as "being shot through with the spirit of compromise and moderation," reflecting the Japanese Emperor's desire for an amicable peace. Witte and his assistants did not agree. G. A. Planson, the Russian mission's secretary, exclaimed that "the Japanese conditions were more heavy than anything it was possible to expect."<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently, in a tense private meeting, the Russian delegation formulated written replies to these demands. Qualified approval was given to all but four of the terms. For example, though the Russians acknowledged Japanese primacy in Korea, they stipulated that Russian subjects would enjoy the same rights as other foreigners in the peninsula, that Japan would not impair the sovereignty of the Korean Emperor, and that Japan would not fortify the

Korean-Manchurian border. (The evident contradiction between the Japanese demand for control of Korea and the Russian demand for the Korean Emperor's sovereign rights was not addressed.) The four rejected terms were, predictably, the demands for payment, Sakhalin, the surrender of interned Russian warships, and the future limitation of Russian naval strength in East Asia.<sup>2</sup>

The future status of Korea dominated the opening negotiations, due to the Russian strictures. On August 12, Komura developed a revised article which accommodated two of the three Russian conditions. In return for Russian recognition of Japanese supremacy in Korea, Japan would guarantee the rights of Russian nationals residing there. Also, the new proposal imposed mutual restrictions on military fortifications on the Korean-Manchurian border. Russia's attempt to uphold Korean sovereignty ignited fierce debate. Eventually, the delegations adopted a compromise in which the final treaty would not mention Korean sovereignty, and the conference minutes and press releases would contain Japanese pledges to consult Seoul before taking any future measures that curtailed Korean sovereignty.<sup>3</sup>

The next area of concern was the disposition of Manchuria. Komura proposed the simultaneous evacuation of the region by the belligerent armies. He also required from Russia a unilateral promise to uphold the Open Door policy



in China. In contrast, Japanese withdrawal from the region would be contingent upon Chinese ability to govern it. Witte persuaded Komura to abandon Tokyo's prerequisite for evacuation, but failed to induce the Japanese delegation to reciprocate Russia's pledge on behalf of the Open Door. Komura contended that Japan, unlike Russia, had done nothing to create suspicion among the nations with interests in China, and therefore did not share Russia's obligation to formally disavow further designs there. According to him, a joint pledge on behalf of the Open Door would be analogous to a joint promise to a judge from a policeman and a burglar that neither would steal again. Finally, Witte acceded to this point.<sup>4</sup>

Both sides easily reached agreement on a mutual promise to refrain from obstructing future foreign investments in Manchuria. Subsequently, the delegations agreed on the transfer to Japan of Russia's lease upon Port Arthur and adjacent territory. The Russians sought to subject this transfer to Chinese approval, since they had originally leased the territory from Beijing. Though Komura admitted that future negotiations between Beijing and Tokyo would be necessary to confirm Japan's acquisition of the harbor and its environs, he did not want the Russian transfer to depend upon Chinese consent. In the end, Witte and Komura concurred that the transfer would be "subject to the consent of the

Chinese government," but that Beijing's approval would be construed as a mere formality. Subsequent debate centered upon the railway linking Port Arthur and Harbin. The two sides eventually agreed that Japanese ownership of the railway would extend northward from the harbor to the town of Changchun (between Harbin and Mukden).<sup>5</sup>

Japan's struggle to wrest Sakhalin and reimbursement from Russia dominated the remainder of the conference. On August 15, Komura first broached the subject of Sakhalin, which Japanese forces had seized the previous month. He argued that the island was a geographical continuation of the Japanese archipelago, and therefore was essential to Japan's national security. When Witte mentioned the 1875 Russo-Japanese treaty by which Japan had relinquished claim to Sakhalin in return for Russian recognition of Japan's possession of the Kurile Islands, Komura retorted that Tokyo had negotiated under duress. The Japanese people regarded Russian occupation of the island as an act of aggression. Witte countered that, after thirty years of Russian hegemony over Sakhalin, the Russian people considered it Russian territory. He also warned that Japan's refusal to evacuate the island would perpetuate animosity between the two countries. Two hours of debate failed to reduce the chasm dividing the two negotiators, who finally decided to defer the issue until a later session. Meanwhile, the revelation

of Japanese peace terms steeled Tsarist resolve. On August 16, Nicholas II wrote to Lamsdorff, "On the loss of Sakhalin there cannot be any talk. The Russian people would never forgive me for giving any of our land to any enemy and my own conscience would not allow it either." St. Petersburg then ordered Witte to remain firm in denying the island to Japan.<sup>6</sup>

Japan's demand for monetary compensation proved even more contentious. On August 14, Roosevelt, still fearing that the indemnity issue would endanger the conference, had implored Kaneko to urge moderation upon his countrymen at Portsmouth. Although the President did not counsel complete abandonment of the demand for payment, he wanted Japan to reduce the amount sought to a minimal level. Three days later, in a particularly rancorous session, Komura and Witte debated at length on this issue. Witte declared that only nations unable to continue fighting paid indemnities to their adversaries, and asserted that Russia was prepared to continue hostilities. Only Japanese occupation of Moscow or St. Petersburg would justify Tokyo's claim to reimbursement. Exasperated, Komura admitted that Russia could continue fighting, but asserted that Japan could do the same, adding sarcastically, "In order to estimate how the war situation will be in the future, you, plenipotentiary, know the results of the past well enough to judge."<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, the indemnity issue was also set aside, but the verbal duel continued. Witte flatly rejected Japan's demand for the Russian warships that had been interned in neutral harbors, claiming that it violated international law. He also balked at the Japanese demand for the future limitation of Russian naval power in the Far East, but assured Komura that the Russian navy needed to concentrate its vessels in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, rather than the Pacific Ocean. Finally, he vowed that the Russian opposition to ceding territory and paying money was unshakable, and suggested that the final session of the conference be held on August 21. His Japanese counterpart calmly accepted this implicit threat to break up the negotiations without concluding a peace treaty.<sup>8</sup>

That evening (on August 17), in the privacy of their hotel rooms, Witte and Komura warned their respective governments of impending rupture, and urged that compromise was necessary in order to prevent further bloodshed in Manchuria. In his message to Lamsdorff, Witte speculated that Japan would drop its demands for interned warships and the future limitation of Russian naval strength in the Far East. He advocated continued resistance on the indemnity issue, calling it a matter of national honor. Then, he strongly advised ceding Sakhalin to Japan. He pointed out that Japan wielded *de facto* control over the island, and

contended that, even if Russia were to reclaim it, Japan would still dominate the surrounding waters. Despite his previous verbal altercation with Komura, Witte was convinced that continuation of hostilities would be more disastrous for Russia than an unpleasant peace settlement. Likewise, Komura warned Tokyo of a possible failure of negotiations, and outlined a tentative compromise plan. He informed Katsura that he would withdraw the demands for interned warships and future limitation of Russian naval power. He would also ask Roosevelt to send a direct appeal to the Tsar. Later that evening, Komura telegraphed Kaneko (who was still in New York City) with instructions to seek the President's help.<sup>9</sup>

This shared sense of urgency enabled the two delegations to make concessions on the following day, August 18. First, Komura gave Witte a statement declaring Japan's readiness to abandon the terms concerning interned vessels and Russian naval power, provided the Russians were willing to discuss Sakhalin and the indemnity. In response, Witte presented a compromise plan in which Russia would obtain the northern half of Sakhalin, and Japan would keep the southern half. He reiterated that St. Petersburg would never pay war reparations beyond the expenses of caring for prisoners of war. Lastly, he warned that, although he personally wished for peace, martial passions were reviving throughout Russia.

Komura replied that the Japanese public expected a generous peace settlement to conclude a victorious war. He then attempted to incorporate the indemnity demand into Witte's proposal, suggesting that Japan would retrocede the northern half of Sakhalin in return for a payment of 1.2 billion yen (which Tokyo had calculated to be the sum of Japan's wartime expenses). Witte countered that the Tsar would never accept such a thinly disguised indemnity, and that Japan could never hope to obtain such a large sum from Russia. At Komura's prodding, however, both delegations included the monetary amount in their reports of the compromise plan to their respective governments. Finally, both sides agreed to postpone the next session until the following Tuesday, August 22, in order to give their governments time to respond to the compromise proposal.<sup>10</sup>

Three days later, on August 21, Komura and Witte received their governments' answers. Tokyo approved of the compromise plan, and authorized Komura to reduce the price for northern Sakhalin if necessary. In contrast, the Tsar said "nyet," arguing that "in essence the Japanese are rearranging their demands." A subsequent note from St. Petersburg ordered Witte to dissolve the conference if the Japanese failed to retreat from their "excessive demands." Undeterred, Witte cabled several appeals to the Russian capital for the surrender of Sakhalin. He warned that,

although world opinion would support the refusal to grant an indemnity, it would not countenance the refusal to cede Sakhalin. If Russia resisted both terms, the world community would blame it for the continuation of hostilities.<sup>11</sup>

The same day, August 21, the Japanese delegation, through Kaneko, sought Roosevelt's intervention. Conferring with his former Harvard classmate, the President learned of the Witte-Komura compromise plan and of Tokyo's acceptance of it. He recommended to Kaneko that Japan halve the demanded sum to 600 million yen, and seek an additional 150 million yen to compensate for the care of Russian prisoners of war. Later that day, responding to the Japanese request, Roosevelt drafted his appeal to Nicholas II. He urged the Russian monarch to accept "in principle" the retrocession of northern Sakhalin in return for payment to Japan. The specific sum would be negotiated subsequent to the restoration of peace. In conclusion, Roosevelt once again warned of the dire consequences to Russia if the war were to resume, predicting that Japan would conquer eastern Siberia. The President sent copies of this appeal to Paris and Berlin, seeking their assistance and assuring them that he would advise the Japanese to choose peace regardless of the size of payment obtained.<sup>12</sup>

Still hoping to soften the Japanese position on the indemnity issue, Roosevelt again tried to influence Kaneko

over the next several days, contending that Japan had already achieved its basic war aims. On August 22, he relayed to Kaneko a telegram which he had received from Senator Henry Cabot Lodge the day before. Echoing the President's sentiments, Lodge had written that "it is the height of folly to continue that war...If (Japan) renews the fighting merely to get money, she will not get the money, and she will turn sympathy from her in this country and elsewhere very rapidly."<sup>13</sup> Asserting that it was Japan's "ethical duty" to cease hostilities, Roosevelt reminded Kaneko of the considerable gains Japan had achieved: "She has won the control of Korea and Manchuria; she has doubled her own fleet in destroying that of Russia; she has Port Arthur, Dalny, the Manchurian railroad, she has Sakhalin." Resumption of warfare to obtain the indemnity would "not be worth (Japan's) while, when so to continue it would probably eat up more money than she could at the end get back from Russia." He implored the Japanese to "show (their) leadership in matters ethical no less than in matters military" by deciding for peace.<sup>14</sup> The President also invoked American history in the attempt to convince Kaneko that land was a better prize for victory than money. He cited the successful American wars against Mexico and Spain; on both occasions, the United States had paid its vanquished foe for territory won in battle. Finally, Roosevelt argued



that further Japanese conquests in Manchuria would fail to win compliance from Russia, and asserted that, if he were in Komura's place, he would abandon the indemnity demand.<sup>15</sup>

In response, Kaneko informed the President of Komura's willingness to reduce substantially the amount sought by Japan. Despite his previous militance, the Foreign Minister now would be satisfied with a sum ranging from 600 to 800 million yen.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Kaneko again upheld the correctness of Japan's quest for payment. Referring to Lodge's letter, Kaneko asked Roosevelt to dispel the Senator's misconceptions:

Our Government is not demanding the indemnity beside keeping the *whole island* of Sakhalin. We have, as you know, surrendered a half of the island, for which we demand a *payment* - not indemnity - this is perfectly reasonable and just on our part.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, Kaneko's emphasis on this distinction soon lost credibility. During the afternoon session on August 23, Witte wrested from Komura an admission that the payment sought for northern Sakhalin was actually the demand for indemnity in disguised form. In another deft maneuver, Witte queried whether Japan would accept the whole of Sakhalin without payment. Komura's refusal of this offer placed Japan in the position of continuing the war for money.<sup>18</sup>

As the deadlock on the reparations issue deepened in Portsmouth, Roosevelt anxiously awaited the results of his appeal to Tsar Nicholas II. On August 23, Meyer presented the President's plea to the Russian monarch. Initially, the Tsar remained stubborn, quoting from a letter that he had just written to Wilhelm II in which he had vowed not to cede territory or pay money. He reminded Meyer that the Japanese army was thousands of miles from Moscow and St. Petersburg, and that it had not advanced since its victory at Mukden the previous March. The Witte-Komura compromise proposal was unacceptable, argued Nicholas II, since the division of Sakhalin would perpetuate tensions between the two nations. Meyer countered that Sakhalin was not part of Russia proper, pointing out that Russia's claim to the island only dated back to the Russo-Japanese treaty of 1875. This contention brought results. At last, the Russian monarch agreed to cede the southern half of Sakhalin. When pressed for a pledge to pay for the northern half, however, the Tsar adamantly refused. He would amply reimburse Japan for its care of Russian prisoners of war, but would never agree to a payment that could be construed as a war indemnity. Still, having relented on the Sakhalin issue, the Tsar indicated to Meyer that he would not enforce his earlier injunction to Witte to break up the conference. The next day, August 24, Lamsdorff informed Witte of the Tsar's decision to cede southern

Sakhalin without payment, calling it Russia's "final proposal." Subsequent appeals from Roosevelt to the Tsar and Witte to accept payment "in principle," with the amount to be determined by subsequent negotiations, met with flat rejections.<sup>19</sup>

On August 26, Witte informed Komura of the Tsar's concession, warning that the Russian delegation would not make further offers. He reminded Komura of the resurgence of pro-war sentiment in Russia, and of Linievich's readiness to launch a counteroffensive in Manchuria. Prolongation of negotiations would not soften the Russian terms. Taken aback, Japan's Foreign Minister requested postponement of the concluding session until Monday, August 28, pending final instructions from Tokyo. Perhaps venting his growing frustration toward Russian rigidity on the indemnity issue, Komura cabled Tokyo that evening with news of Russia's refusal to abandon its position on *both* key issues of Sakhalin and reparations. He then informed his government of his decision to break off negotiations with Witte. From his communications, Tokyo did not learn of the Tsar's decision to cede southern Sakhalin.<sup>20</sup>

Komura's bombshell arrived in Tokyo at a time in which the Japanese government was reluctantly considering further diminution of the amount of monetary compensation sought from Russia. Kaneko had relayed Roosevelt's messages on the

indemnity question to Tokyo. The President's advice was a bitter pill for Japan's leaders, who were only too aware of the burgeoning demands of the Japanese public for a huge payment from Russia. They had, however, decided that Japan's need for peace outweighed its need for war reparations, and were in the process of drafting new instructions for the delegation which authorized it to further reduce the demanded sum when Komura's telegram arrived. Stung into action, Katsura ordered his Foreign Minister to postpone the last session until August 29, to allow time for the Japanese government to formulate final instructions. Several of Japan's leaders then framed revised orders for Komura. Influenced by Navy Minister Yamamoto Gonnohyoe, these instructions called for retention of Sakhalin, but abandonment of the claim for an indemnity. After a lengthy debate on this proposal, the *Genro* and the cabinet members diluted it still further. Komura was now to withdraw both controversial demands in order to secure peace.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, both delegations in Portsmouth were preparing for imminent departure. Witte agreed to the Japanese request to defer the final session until August 29, but asserted that the passage of extra time would not change the final Russian offer.<sup>22</sup> In Oyster Bay, a disheartened President, unaware of Tokyo's increasing desperation, was prepared to concede defeat. He blamed the Russians for the

impasse. On August 25, Roosevelt wrote to his son Kermit, "I am having my hair turned gray by dealing with the Russian and Japanese peace negotiators. The Japanese ask too much, but the Russians are ten times worse than the Japs because they are so stupid and won't tell the truth."<sup>23</sup> Messages from Portsmouth predicting failure deepened Roosevelt's pessimism. Finally, in a memorandum to Kaneko's secretary, the Rough Rider expressed his resignation on August 27:

Tell (Kaneko) that the President has striven to prepare the Associated Press for the break, explaining to them that it is Russia's fault, but that unless he hears something new,...he will not try to do anything further in the matter. It seems to him useless for him to add another word to what he has said to the Tsar.<sup>24</sup>

The tension was soon broken. On the afternoon of August 28, Komura, who had been willing to bring the conference to the brink of dissolution over the issues of Sakhalin and war reparations, received the new orders from Tokyo. The Japanese government's retreat on both issues shocked its delegation. Thunderstruck, Komura's private secretary, Honda Kumataro, loudly denounced his government's decision: "What a shameful thing it is!"<sup>25</sup> The stoic Foreign Minister vainly strove to bolster the spirits of his crestfallen colleagues while preparing for the next day's session.

Momentous developments in Tokyo soon brought some cheer

to the Japanese negotiators. Shortly after the Japanese government cabled its orders to Komura, British ambassador Sir Claude MacDonald summoned Ishii Kikujiro, then the head of the commercial bureau of the foreign ministry. Through MacDonald, Ishii learned of the Tsar's August 23 decision to cede southern Sakhalin to Japan. Meyer had informed the British embassy in St. Petersburg of his audience with the Russian monarch, and it was standard practice for the British Foreign Office to relay important information to other posts.<sup>26</sup> Regarding this revelation to be "an act of Providence,"<sup>27</sup> Ishii quickly informed Katsura. The Prime Minister rapidly obtained consent from the cabinet, *Genro*, and Emperor to dispatch revised instructions to Komura, in which he was to demand the southern half of the contested island without payment for the northern portion.<sup>28</sup> Tokyo rushed its new instructions to Portsmouth. Still somewhat chagrined by the Japanese government's compromise on the two troublesome issues, the Foreign Minister received the revised orders, muttering, "This is what I thought they would tell me."<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, Witte received another message from Lamsdorff. The Tsar now ordered his delegation to dissolve the conference on the next day, regardless of any further developments in the negotiations. Defiantly, Nicholas II concluded, "I prefer to continue the war than to await

gracious concessions on the part of Japan." Rosen favored obeying the Russian monarch. Witte, on the other hand, decided that, on August 29, he would instead repeat his August 18 offer to cede southern Sakhalin to Japan, without reparations. This way, if Komura refused this condition, the blame for the resulting failure of the conference would fall upon Japan, rather than Russia.<sup>30</sup>

The next morning's session began with a private meeting between the four plenipotentiaries, in which the two sides informally agreed to the division of Sakhalin and the withdrawal of the indemnity demand. Shortly afterward, Komura and Witte made the compromise official during the formal negotiating session. They specified that the island would be partitioned along the fiftieth parallel, and concurred on a mutual prohibition against military installations there. Both nations would honor freedom of navigation in the Strait of La Perouse (south of the island) and in the Strait of Tartary (between the island and the mainland).<sup>31</sup>

Soon afterward, Witte's personal secretary, Ivan Korostovetz, telephoned the reporters at the hotel to give them the good news that peace was assured. During a break in the session, Witte triumphantly cabled St. Petersburg with the report that "Japan has accepted our demands concerning peace conditions...Russia will remain a great power in the

Far East, the same great power she was until now and which she will always remain." He also sent a congratulatory note to Roosevelt: "To you History will award the glory of having taken the generous initiative in bringing about the conference, whose labors will now probably result in establishing a peace honorable to both sides."<sup>32</sup> Though he did not share his counterpart's exuberance, Komura likewise notified Tokyo and expressed gratitude to the President: "I beg to thank you again, Mr. President, for all you have done in the interest of peace...Owing to your earnest and unceasing efforts and the magnanimity of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, peace, in the interest of humanity and civilization, is assured."<sup>33</sup> Roosevelt replied with a telegram praising Japan for its "wisdom and magnanimity...in its hour of triumph."<sup>34</sup>

The divisive issues finally resolved, the two delegations then addressed several residual points over the next several days. After receiving authorization from their respective governments, Komura and Witte signed an armistice protocol and established an eighteen-month time limit for the military evacuation of Manchuria. The negotiators then agreed that their nations would exchange prisoners of war and reimburse each other for the costs of caring for them. Since Japan had spent much more than Russia in this area, Russia would pay Japan the difference between the two



amounts. They committed their nations to a future revision of the existing Russo-Japanese commercial treaty. Russia and Japan would also discuss connecting their Manchurian railways once peace was restored.<sup>35</sup>

The Portsmouth Conference came to a close with the signing of the peace treaty on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 5, 1905.<sup>36</sup> The ordeal reinforced American admiration of Japan and contempt for Russia. The American press hailed Japan's willingness to sacrifice in the name of peace as "a most impressive lesson in moderation, self-restraint, and consummate world statesmanship."<sup>37</sup>

Writing to William Rockhill, the American ambassador to China, on August 29, Roosevelt stated, "I was pro-Japanese before, but after my experience with the peace commissioners, I am far stronger pro-Japanese than ever."<sup>38</sup>

In Roosevelt's view, Japan's final decision to compromise derived as much from the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance on August 12<sup>39</sup> as from the prudence of its leaders. He surmised that the renewed alliance allayed Japanese fears of future Russian aggression. To Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, the British ambassador in Washington, the President wrote on September 4, "I have no doubt that the signing of the treaty between England and Japan was a powerful factor in inducing Japan to be wise and reasonable as to terms."<sup>40</sup>

Japanese public reaction to the Portsmouth Treaty sorely tested this laudatory perception of the Asian island nation. Nationalistic newspapers in Japan, which had heightened their readers' expectations of a generous peace settlement, began to blast the government as rumors of its concessions emerged. Still unaware of the actual military situation in Manchuria, firebrands in the Japanese press argued that the peace settlement failed to achieve the primary objective of eliminating the Russian threat in Korea and Manchuria, and urged the Emperor to reject the coming treaty. A scathing article in the *Yorozu Choho* on September 1 accused Komura of betraying Japan:

The glory of our Imperial nation, demonstrated to all the world by our military triumphs, has been completely erased by none other than our plenipotentiary. It is (he) who has smeared the face of the ever-victorious nation. It is (he) who has acted miserably on the international stage and put himself to shame. On the day of his return, he should be met with flags of mourning. Every person in the city (of Tokyo) should shut the door of his house and turn away from him. Any who welcome this soft fellow, who has invited unprecedented humiliation upon our nation, are wretched people with no blood, no public mind, no sense of righteousness.<sup>41</sup>

Other Japanese newspapers condemned the treaty as "an insult to the nation" and "the bitterest dose the nation has ever been compelled to take."<sup>42</sup> Very few Tokyo newspapers, such

as the government-owned *Kokumin Shimbun*, supported the peace settlement, attempting to convince their readers that Japan had abandoned only its secondary war aims, and that further prosecution of hostilities would exact a ruinous cost from the Japanese nation.<sup>43</sup>

Such counsel fell upon deaf ears, as Japanese citizens explosively expressed their outrage. Ominously, the upheaval in the Japanese capital soon assumed an anti-American tone. Protestors mutilated photographs of Roosevelt,<sup>44</sup> and informed the American embassy of an impending visit, in order to "express appreciation for the part the President had played in depriving Japan of the fruits of war."<sup>45</sup> On the evening of September 5, American ambassador Lloyd Griscom and railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman attended a dinner party given by Japan's Finance Minister, Baron Sone Arasuke. Japanese crowds stoned two members of the American embassy as they travelled to Sone's residence. The next day, September 6, the Japanese government placed Tokyo under martial law in order to restore order.<sup>46</sup> More than one thousand people were either killed or wounded as a result of the unrest that convulsed Japan.<sup>47</sup>

Reporting the upheaval to Secretary of State Elihu Root on September 15, Griscom emphasized his conviction that the threats to the foreign community in Japan were merely incidental to the general rioting. He asserted that the

stage was set for the popular explosion when "ambitious politicians and sensational newspapers combined to inflame the imagination of the masses and raise to impossible heights their expectations as to what would be the fruits of victory."<sup>48</sup> He blamed the secretiveness of the Japanese government, which prevented "calm discussion of the logical results of the war."<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, after explaining the Japanese outburst to Washington, Griscom then suggested that it offered an important case study of the nation's true character:

The riots have had particular interest to the world at large, for not only have foreigners been to some extent concerned, but they have had an opportunity of studying the political and social institutions of Japan under the strain of trying times. It is only in such crises as these that the veil of Oriental inscrutability is momentarily lifted and the foreign observer enabled to gain a brief glimpse of the operation of the Japanese mental process and the well-spring of their emotions.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, the *New York Times* ascribed the unrest to Tokyo's wartime unwillingness to divulge accurate information to its citizens, but also interpreted the chaos as a blot upon the Japanese character. The explosive response to the Portsmouth Treaty, it was argued, demonstrated conclusively that the modernization of Japan had been a superficial phenomenon, leaving unchanged its

basic, primitive nature. A September 8 editorial discussing "the grave news from Tokyo" averred,

...it is the (Japanese) Government's fault that (its) people do not see and agree that peace on the terms concluded and at the time concluded was wise, best, and just for Japan...(The rioting) is an astonishing "reversal of form" for Japan...It warns us that, rapid and astonishing as has been her advance in civilization during the past thirty years, and great as has been her eagerness to adopt the Western ways, she is still far from being wholly regenerate.<sup>51</sup>

To make matters worse, the editorial continued, Tokyo's failure to inform its citizenry of Japan's actual military and diplomatic position encouraged misunderstanding which jeopardized the future of Japanese-American amity:

The evil consequences of (Tokyo's) stubborn refusal to recognize American impartiality may persist to trouble our relations with Japan for years...The inner Government circle in Tokyo, we may be sure, is well aware that Mr. Roosevelt's good offices were in a very high degree saving and beneficent for the empire...His Imperial Majesty's Government owes it first of all to itself, as a measure of prudence and safety, and nearly as much to us in common fairness, to make it known everywhere throughout the land that Mr. Roosevelt in his intercession conducted himself, not as the friend of either belligerent alone, but as the friend of both and of humanity,...desiring only that for the sake both of Russia and Japan there should be concluded a "just and lasting peace."<sup>52</sup>

Roosevelt also blamed Tokyo for Japan's discontent, and viewed the Japanese behavior as a vindication of his

peacemaking efforts and his vision of the postwar balance of power in East Asia. To his friend Hermann Speck von Sternburg, the German ambassador to the United States, the President expressed his chagrin toward the Japanese government on September 6:

Why in the world the Japanese statesmen, usually so astute, permitted their people to think they had to get a large indemnity, I cannot understand. If they had in the beginning blown their trumpets over the immense amount they were getting; if they had shown how Korea was theirs, Manchuria in effect theirs, Port Arthur and Dalny theirs; how they had won a triumph which since the days of Napoleon has only been paralleled by Germany in 1870 - if they had done all this, I think they could have made their people feel proud instead of humiliated.<sup>53</sup>

As a postscript to a letter written to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge on the same day, Roosevelt commented that the unrest in Tokyo was "unpleasant evidence that the Japanese mob - I hope not the Japanese people - has had its head completely turned," and added that "the peace is evidently a wise one from *our* standpoint, too."<sup>54</sup> Two days later, the President briefly elaborated this final point in another note to Lodge. Claiming that the riots "showed that the (Japanese) people have not advanced as far as their Government," he asserted that "it is a good thing for mankind that the war should have ended as it did, without the Japanese getting an enormous indemnity and with them still facing Russia in East

Asia."<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps responding to the domestic hostility faced by Japan's leaders in the aftermath of the conference, Roosevelt decided to maintain the secrecy of Tokyo's initial requests for American mediation from the spring of 1905. Although aware of growing Japanese suspicions of American complicity in the framing of the unwelcome peace, the President chose not to reveal the information that likely would have further incriminated Japan's embattled leaders in their compatriots' eyes.<sup>56</sup> Roosevelt's decision to maintain the confidentiality of his pre-conference correspondence with Tokyo despite the anti-American tinge to the Japanese outburst attests to the tactfulness with which he dealt with Japan's leaders. Unfortunately, suspicions of American duplicity lingered among many of Japan's citizens long after the immediate reactions to the treaty subsided. This undercurrent of tension would color Japanese-American relations as competition between the two nations for influence in East Asia sharpened through the years subsequent to the Portsmouth Conference.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 84.
2. Ibid., pp. 85-88.
3. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
4. Ibid., p. 96.
5. Ibid., pp. 102-107.
6. Ibid., pp. 101-108.
7. Ibid., pp. 111-112.
8. Ibid., pp. 113-115.
9. Ibid., pp. 115-116.
10. Ibid., pp. 117-118.
11. Ibid., pp. 133-141.
12. Ibid., pp. 135-136.



13. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Letter to Theodore Roosevelt, 8/21/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

14. Theodore Roosevelt, Letter to Viscount Kaneko Kentaro, 8/23/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

15. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, pp. 147-148.

16. Ibid., p. 137.

17. Viscount Kaneko Kentaro, Letter to Theodore Roosevelt, 8/23/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

18. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 144-145.

19. Ibid., pp. 141-147.

20. Ibid., pp. 149-151.

21. Ibid., pp. 152-155.

22. Ibid., p. 157.

23. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, IV*, pp. 1316-1317.

24. Theodore Roosevelt, Letter to Viscount Kaneko Kentaro, 8/27/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

25. Esthus, *Double eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 156.

26. Ibid., p. 157.

27. Viscount Ishii Kikujiro, *Diplomatic Commentaries* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1936), p. 68.

28. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 158.

29. Ibid., p. 158.

30. Ibid., pp. 158-159.

31. Ibid., pp. 159-160.

32. Ibid., p. 161.

33. Baron Komura Jutarō, Letter to Theodore Roosevelt, 8/29/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

34. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, IV*, p. 1326.

35. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, pp. 161-179.
36. Ibid., pp. 181-183.
37. Quoted from Winston B. Thorson, "American Public Opinion and the Portsmouth Peace Conference." From *American Historical Review*, April, 1948 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 459.
38. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, IV*, p. 1327.
39. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 94.
40. Ibid., p. 173.
41. Okamoto, *Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 168-169.
42. Ibid., p. 169.
43. Warner, *Tide at Sunrise*, p. 536.
44. Okamoto, *Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War*, p. 172.

45. Davids, *American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China*, p. 149.

46. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, p. 187.

47. Warner, *Tide at Sunrise*, p. 536.

48. Davids, *American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China*, p. 151.

49. Ibid., p. 151.

50. Ibid., p. 152.

51. *New York Times*, 9/8/05, p. 8.

52. Ibid., p. 8.

53. Theodore Roosevelt, Letter to Hermann Speck von Sternburg, 9/6/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

54. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, V, p. 13.

55. Theodore Roosevelt, Letter to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, 9/8/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.

56. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, pp. 192-193.

**CONCLUSION:**

**CASUALTY OF WAR:**

**ECLIPSE OF THE "OPEN DOOR" AFTER 1905**

The meteoric rise of Japan as a significant participant in the world arena, as occasioned by the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, challenged the complacent assumptions of American leaders regarding their ability to shape events in East Asia. Between 1899 and 1904, Washington had perceived the nations of Europe as the greatest threat to the American vision of an inviolate China wholly open to international commerce. Painfully aware of their inability to defend their Asian interests with armed force, American leaders had viewed with dismay the European dissection of northeastern China in the late 1890s. Nevertheless, since the military power of the Western European nations was widely dispersed among their far-flung imperial possessions, Washington confidently believed that words alone would suffice to maintain conditions in East Asia conducive to American interests. The Russian occupation of Manchuria after the Boxer Rebellion dealt the first serious blow to this assumption. Unable to counteract the Russian aggression, American leaders eventually hailed Japan's bold stroke in 1904, hoping that Japanese objectives on the Asian continent coincided with their own. However, Japan's armed accomplishments during the war with Russia portended a new, much greater challenge to the American goals enumerated in the "Open Door" notes of 1899 and 1900. By the summer of 1905, American leaders faced a nation which had achieved

primacy in East Asia. Unencumbered by a territorially expansive empire, Japan could afford to concentrate all of its formidable armed strength in that region, thereby posing a potential threat of unmatched gravity to the "Open Door."

To a significant extent, this threat motivated Theodore Roosevelt to convene a peace conference between the belligerents in the summer of 1905. Unaware of the exhausted condition of the Japanese forces in Manchuria after their hard-won victory at Mukden, the President believed that a continuation of hostilities would result in the complete Japanese domination of Manchuria and possibly Siberia. He therefore sought to restore peace before Japan eliminated the Russian presence in East Asia. In his vision of the postwar balance of power in Asia, each former belligerent would check the other's expansionistic impulses, thereby upholding the "Open Door" principle. At the same time, Roosevelt recognized that Japan's postwar primacy in the region necessitated revision of John Hay's precepts. Japanese control of Korea and southern Manchuria at war's end, which Roosevelt supported, forced Washington to relax the commitment to Chinese territorial integrity which it had assumed with the second "Open Door" note. From Washington's point of view, then, the peace of Portsmouth represented an attempt to create a compromise between American and Japanese objectives in East Asia.



For his mediation efforts, Roosevelt won accolades from other world leaders and from his fellow Americans. In 1906, he became the first American president to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Roosevelt's attempt to reconcile the "Open Door" principle with Japanese expansionism proved short-lived. Even before the decade ended, Japan and the United States had embarked upon a fateful competition for influence in East Asia which undermined the President's conception of the postwar balance of power and set the two nations upon a fateful collision course.

Some Americans began to sound the alarm while the Portsmouth Conference was still in progress. On August 18, 1905, a *New York Times* editorial entitled "The Coming Struggle with Japan" predicted that Japanese business would dominate East Asia as effectively as had Japanese arms. Gone was the belief that Japan's war effort had served American interests: "...we perceive that the actuating motives of Japan and of Russia in their struggle for dominion in the East were substantially identical...We furthermore perceive that whichever was victorious, we were bound to be the losers."<sup>2</sup> Instead, the Russo-Japanese War heralded an era in which Japan would undersell, and thus eclipse, all foreign competition in East Asia:

...We shall grievously mistake (the Japanese) if we suppose they will be less efficient in the arts of peace than they have been in the arts of war...If it be true that price makes the market, another terrible taking down awaits the Western world's vanity, and this time its pockets will come into the reckoning. If there be a yellow peril, undoubtedly it is a commercial one.<sup>3</sup>

Events soon substantiated this grim prognosis for the "Open Door" in the territory that had fallen into the Japanese orbit. In August of 1905, the American railroad magnate Edward H. Harriman had travelled to Tokyo in the hopes of cultivating a Japanese-American partnership for the development of southern Manchuria. Specifically, he sought a joint endeavor to rebuild and expand the region's railways in order to advance his own dream of a transportation system that would improve international commerce by circumnavigating the world. By the time Harriman left Tokyo on October 16, 1905, he had secured an agreement that would have joined American investors with the Japanese government in the expansion and operation of the railways in southern Manchuria. On the same day, Komura returned to the Japanese capital from his sojourn in the United States. Aghast at this proposal, the Foreign Minister promptly vetoed it. In large part, his opposition derived from the fear that sharing Japan's limited gains with the United States would fan the flames of popular discontent at home. In the spring

of 1906, the American banker Jacob Schiff, who had spearheaded American loans to wartime Japan, attempted to resurrect Harriman's scheme, but without success.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, Komura strove to enhance the Japanese position in Manchuria through negotiations with Chinese leaders. In mid-November of 1905, he travelled to Beijing in order to obtain China's official approval of the Portsmouth Treaty clauses which granted to Japan the former Russian leaseholds on Port Arthur and the railway linking it to Changchun to the north. He also sought Chinese concurrence with confidential proposals designed to increase Japanese control over the development of railways and international commerce in Manchuria. Komura's visit to the Chinese capital coincided with the Qing government's belated efforts to enact political reforms and to centralize its control over Chinese territory. As part of their reformist drive, Chinese leaders resolved to limit the foreign inroads into their nation's territory, and to regain control over the network of foreign-owned railroads which increasingly dominated its economy.<sup>5</sup> The Chinese plenipotentiaries who met Komura and Uchida Yasuya (Japan's ambassador to Beijing) in November of 1905 struggled to defend this growing national consciousness against Japanese expansionism. Among the Chinese representatives was Yuan Shikai, who had covertly provided the Japanese armies with supplies and military information

obtained through espionage, believing that Japan would champion Chinese nationhood in return.<sup>6</sup>

The Beijing Conference dashed Yuan's hopes. Komura abruptly dismissed as "inconsequential matters" Chinese proposals for joint control of Port Arthur and recognition of Chinese sovereignty in southern Manchuria. Further, he contended that the military occupation of southern Manchuria conferred upon Japan the right to deny other nations access to the region. Invoking the possible threat of a Russian war of revenge, Komura also pressured the Chinese to allow Japan to construct railways that would penetrate northward toward Siberia. By the Sino-Japanese accords signed on December 22, 1905, Komura laid the foundations for Japan's economic domination of Manchuria. He extracted a Chinese pledge not to construct railways that would threaten Japanese economic interests in Manchuria. Finally, Japan would exercise considerable influence in the opening of Manchurian towns to international trade.<sup>7</sup> Several subordinate Japanese diplomats perceived the potential force of Chinese nationalism, and advised Tokyo that Japan should cultivate Chinese friendship by refraining from such exploitation. Komura, however, strongly believed that "Japan should doggedly push forward toward its imperial destiny, no matter how much the forces of nationalism were giving the fruits of victory a sour taste."<sup>8</sup> Through the postwar era, the

Foreign Minister's views would prevail.

The American consul in Mukden, Willard Straight, attempted in 1907 to stem this trend by proposing a Manchurian bank, financed by Edward H. Harriman, to subsidize Chinese administration of Manchuria. Unfortunately, the financial panic of that year prevented implementation of his idea.<sup>9</sup> Official American policy soon recognized that such schemes had no place in a region that had fallen into the Japanese orbit. The Roosevelt administration initiated Washington's pragmatic acceptance of Japan's continental foothold in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. It had officially recognized Japanese suzerainty over Korea with the Taft-Katsura Agreement signed in July of 1905. In October of 1908, Tokyo instructed Takahira to reach another formal understanding with Secretary of State Elihu Root regarding Japanese and American spheres of influence in East Asia and the Pacific. The Root-Takahira Agreement, signed on November 30, 1908, invoked the "Open Door" policy for China and proclaimed the Pacific Ocean to be an open avenue of trade. However, the agreement embodied Roosevelt's pragmatic retreat from the original intent of the "Open Door" notes by accepting Japanese hegemony over southern Manchuria. A disgruntled Willard Straight condemned the agreement as "a terrible diplomatic blunder" which signalled American abandonment of

China to Japanese designs.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, leaders in Washington and Tokyo praised it as a gesture which would lay the foundations for subsequent Japanese-American harmony.

Unfortunately, the coexistence which the Root-Takahira Agreement apparently heralded proved short-lived. Attempts by the United States to enhance its position in postwar East Asia (such as Harriman's Manchurian railway venture) hastened rapprochement between the two former belligerents, which shared a common desire to minimize the American economic and political penetration of China. As a result, Theodore Roosevelt's vision of the postwar balance of power in East Asia began to break down even before he left the presidency. On July 25, 1907, after concluding a new commercial treaty, Russia and Japan signed two agreements regarding their positions on the Asian continent. Only one, which reaffirmed the Portsmouth Treaty and declared the signatories' support for the "Open Door" in China, was publicized. The secret accord delineated their spheres of interest in Manchuria and recognized Russia's special interests in Outer Mongolia as well as Japan's domination of Korea. Subsequently, on July 4, 1910, Tokyo and St. Petersburg concluded another entente which again contained publicized and confidential clauses. Notably, the public portion omitted any obligation to support the "Open Door" and Chinese territorial integrity. Instead, it committed the

signatories to agree upon measures in the event of external threats to the *status quo* in Manchuria. The secret portion reaffirmed the line of demarcation separating their Manchurian domains and pledged Russia and Japan to common action in defense of them.<sup>11</sup>

Besides threatening American policy objectives in China, this Russo-Japanese rapprochement in the years immediately following the Portsmouth Conference also intensified the potential Japanese menace to American possessions in the western Pacific Ocean. Having restored amity with its erstwhile adversary, Japan could then contemplate expansion into other regions. Weakly defended American insular territories in the Pacific, particularly the Philippines, presented easy targets for a renewed Japanese thrust. At an early stage of the Russo-Japanese War, Washington read the Russian plight as a case study of the fatal consequences of imperialism without concomitant military strength. Theodore Roosevelt and his colleagues fervently hoped that the American people would awaken from their ingrained sense of isolation from the rest of the world and support an expansion of their nation's armed forces in order to defend its claim to the status of a world power. Writing to the President on February 15, 1904, former Secretary of War (and future Secretary of State) Elihu Root praised Admiral Togo Heihachiro's initial strike against

Port Arthur, and then added hopefully, "some people in the United States might well learn the lesson that mere bigness does not take the place of perfect preparation and readiness for instant action."<sup>12</sup> Replying to Root the next day, Roosevelt concurred, lamenting, "oh, if only our people would learn the need of preparedness, and of shaping things so that decision and action alike can be instantaneous. Mere bigness, if it is also mere flabbiness, means nothing but disgrace."<sup>13</sup>

On June 11, 1904, the President expressed to Takahira and Kaneko his growing misgivings regarding Japan's military prowess. Later describing this meeting in a letter to Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, Roosevelt recalled,

I told them that I thought their chief danger was lest Japan might get the "big head" and enter into a general career of insolence and aggression; that such a career would undoubtedly be temporarily very unpleasant to the rest of the world, but that it would in the end be still more unpleasant for Japan. I added that though I felt there was a possibility of this happening, I did not think it probable, because I was a firm believer in the Japanese people.<sup>14</sup>

As a postscript to this letter, Roosevelt commented, "I am perfectly well aware that if they win out (against Russia), it may possibly mean a struggle between them and us in the future; but I hope not and believe not."<sup>15</sup>



The enormity of Japan's subsequent armed triumphs exacerbated the President's fears of American weakness in the Pacific. Writing to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge on June 5, 1905, Roosevelt averred, "Most certainly the Japanese have shown themselves to be terrible foes. There can be none more dangerous in all the world." He then emphasized that the future of the American insular empire depended not only upon amicable relations with Japan, but also upon increased military power. Characterizing Japan as "a power jealous, sensitive, and warlike, which, if irritated, could at once take both the Philippines and Hawaii from us," the President concluded with an expression of hope that "we can persuade our people...to act in the spirit of generous justice and genuine courtesy toward Japan, and to keep the (American) navy respectable in numbers and more than respectable in the efficiency of its units. If we act thus, we need not fear the Japanese. But if, as Brooks Adams says, we show ourselves 'opulent, aggressive, and unarmed,' the Japanese may some time work us an injury."<sup>16</sup>

Personnel in the American armed forces soon echoed Roosevelt's alarm. In late 1905, an American army officer named Homer Lea began work on a remarkable book that was finally published in 1909. Lea had witnessed Japanese soldiers in action during the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion, and had spent time in Japan as chief of staff to

the Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen.<sup>17</sup> His book, entitled *The Valor of Ignorance*, predicted with stunning (and prophetic) detail a future war between the United States and Japan in which the latter would attack Hawaii and easily wrest the Philippines from American control:

In these (Hawaiian) islands at the present time the number of Japanese who have completed their active term of service in the imperial armies, a part of whom are veterans of the Russian War, exceeds the entire field army of the United States. Within twenty-four hours after a declaration of war, the solitary American battalion that stands guard over these islands will disappear...In a military sense, the Philippines are closer to Japan than were the shores of Manchuria in the Russian War...Only a solitary division of troops must be overcome on these undefended islands. The conquest of (the Philippines) by Japan will be less of a military undertaking than was the seizure of Cuba by the United States (in 1898).<sup>18</sup>

According to Lea, the Japanese juggernaut would then easily occupy much of the Pacific coast of the mainland United States. Pointing out that the bulk of America's armed forces were concentrated in the eastern part of the country, he asserted that "in a military sense Japan is one-third closer to (the states of) Washington, Oregon, and California than the military power of the United States."<sup>19</sup>

The reforms which the American armed forces undertook in the decades subsequent to the Russo-Japanese War proved inadequate to meet the threat which Roosevelt, Root, and Lea

(among others) discerned. Many Americans who read *The Valor of Ignorance* prior to 1941 dismissed it as the work of an eccentric "prophet of American doom."<sup>20</sup> The United States Army was particularly resistant to change. In his annual message to Congress on December 6, 1904, Roosevelt reminded the legislators that "no other civilized nation has, relative to its population, such a diminutive army as ours," and emphasized the need for improving professionalism among American soldiers.<sup>21</sup> Continuing abhorrence of large standing armies and an equally ingrained sense of immunity from overseas events, however, deterred most Americans from supporting major enlargements of the land forces of the United States.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps because it was the primary agent of American military power in the Pacific Ocean, the United States Navy proved more responsive to the potential threat which Japan posed after 1905. In his 1904 annual message to Congress, Roosevelt urged naval expansion in dramatic terms: "There is no more patriotic duty before us as a people than to keep the navy adequate to the needs of this country's position... We have undertaken to secure for ourselves our just share in the trade of the Orient...Unless our attitude in (this) and all similar matters is to be a mere boastful sham, we cannot afford to abandon our naval programme."<sup>23</sup> Spurred by the Japanese victory at Tsushima the following May, Congress

allocated over \$117,500,000 for the construction of warships for the fiscal year of 1905; this grant to the navy was nearly double that of the previous year.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, in the spring of 1908, Congress authorized a policy of constructing two battleships per year.<sup>25</sup> The United States thus became a full participant in the international race for naval supremacy, which escalated rapidly as the First World War approached.

Japan's naval primacy in the western Pacific after the destruction of the Baltic Fleet also induced American naval strategists to contemplate the possibility of an eventual war between Japan and the United States. Such a threat soon apparently emerged. In October of 1906, the school board in San Francisco, California, enacted a segregationist law which shunted all Chinese and Japanese students to an "Oriental Public School."<sup>26</sup> Understandably, this ruling ignited considerable resentment in Japan. In the United States, rumors of Japanese military retaliation abounded for several tense months. At Roosevelt's urging, the General Board of the United States Navy developed a strategic plan for defending American insular possessions against a Japanese onslaught. Later termed "Plan Orange," it was the first plan in American military history that was developed in peacetime for the conduct of war against a designated enemy.<sup>27</sup> In its original form, it conceded victory to Japan

in the opening stages of the conflict. Meanwhile, however, American warships from the Atlantic and the western Pacific would assemble at Hawaii, and eventually launch a massive counteroffensive. Although "Plan Orange" underwent numerous revisions through subsequent years, it remained the basic contingency plan of the United States Navy for war with Japan until the eve of American entry into the Second World War.<sup>28</sup>

The United States sought to display to the rest of the world the results of these efforts to strengthen the American navy in 1907. In December of that year, the "Great White Fleet" embarked upon a global voyage; one of the most important stops on its itinerary was Tokyo Bay. Given the tensions between Japan and the United States at the time, many American military and diplomatic personnel feared the possibility of a Japanese assault upon the sixteen new warships. As a precautionary measure, Roosevelt consulted Tokyo, which assured him that the whole fleet would receive a cordial welcome there. Also, the President replaced the fleet's commander, Captain Robley Evans, universally known as "Fighting Bob," with Admiral Charles Sperry, whose continued advocacy of Japanese-American cooperation had weathered the storm of anti-Japanese sentiment among the upper echelons of the American navy. Though Sperry later recalled that he "had been walking on eggs"<sup>29</sup> when the

fleet steamed into Tokyo Bay in late October of 1908, the visit to Japan passed without incident. According to the historian Richard D. Challener, the Great White Fleet's voyage to Japan, with the pro-Japanese Sperry at its helm, "proved to be an adroit combination of the olive branch and the sword."<sup>30</sup> It apparently achieved the President's dual goals of persuading Japan of the ability of the United States to defend its interests in the Pacific and East Asia, and of reaffirming Japanese-American harmony.

However, continued crises in Japanese-American relations underscored American weakness in the Pacific. In March of 1907, Roosevelt defused the tensions with Japan arising from San Francisco's racism by negotiating a "Gentleman's Agreement," in which Japan agreed to limit emigration to the United States in return for a revocation of the offensive law. Unfortunately, the restored calm was shattered two months later when anti-Japanese riots erupted in the California city.<sup>31</sup> The President, by then fully aware of Japan's need to recover from its war with Russia, doubted that Tokyo would interpret San Francisco's xenophobia as a *casus belli*.<sup>32</sup> Many Japanese statesmen likewise denied the possibility of war between Japan and the United States at that time. Count Hayashi Tadasu, Japan's ambassador to Britain, wrote, "...a future war between America and Japan is only journalistic talk...a war between

the two countries can never take place under any circumstances...Japan regards America as her benefactor, and she is deeply indebted to her for much help and for many improvements. In reality, the feelings of Japan for America are as cordial as they were fifty years ago."<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, this new crisis compelled American military leaders to retreat from their original strategy in the Pacific, particularly with regard to their plans for the defense of the Philippines. In December of 1907, General Leonard Wood, then the commander of the Philippine Division of the American army, argued that Manila Bay would be the only region in the archipelago in which American forces could fend off a Japanese strike until rescue by the navy.<sup>34</sup> The following year, 1908, the American navy established its main Pacific base east of the Philippines, at Pearl Harbor on the Hawaiian island of Oahu.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, the Great White Fleet's visit to Tokyo Bay induced Japan to accelerate its own naval production.<sup>36</sup> Roosevelt, cognizant that the American position in the western Pacific was hostage to amicable relations between the United States and Japan, condemned the "infernal fools in California" and asserted that, should such "reckless insults" provoke war with Japan, "it will be the (American) Nation which will pay the consequences."<sup>37</sup> The Philippine archipelago, once perceived as a vital stepping stone between the United States and

China, had become, in Roosevelt's words, "America's heel of Achilles" in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>38</sup>

The Russo-Japanese War and the Portsmouth Conference thus inaugurated an era of competition between the United States and Japan for influence in East Asia that would intensify through the next four decades. After 1905, American leaders regarded Japan as the primary threat to their Asian objectives. Conversely, lingering suspicions of American collusion with Russia during the Portsmouth Conference, coupled with the postwar attempts of the United States to enhance its position on the Asian mainland, convinced many Japanese that their erstwhile friend sought to thwart Japan's quest for "great power" status in the world arena. Contrary to the initial expectations of the leaders in Tokyo and Washington, then, the tumultuous events of 1904-1905 set their respective nations on a collision course that would culminate in armed struggle.



## ENDNOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, p. 224.
2. *New York Times*, 8/18/05, p. 6.
3. Ibid., p. 6.
4. John Albert White, *The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 325-326.
5. Ibid., pp. 331-333.
6. Warner, *Tide at Sunrise*, pp. 355-357.
7. White, *Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War*, pp. 334-338.
8. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, pp. 203-204.
9. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, pp. 241-242.
10. Ibid., pp. 240-242.

11. Esthus, *Double Eagle and Rising Sun*, pp. 197-203.
12. Elihu Root, Letter to Theodore Roosevelt, 2/15/04. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.
13. Theodore Roosevelt, Letter to Elihu Root, 2/16/04. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.
14. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, IV*, p. 830.
15. Ibid., pp. 831-832.
16. Theodore Roosevelt, Letter to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, 6/5/05. From Theodore Roosevelt Papers, Microfilm.
17. Richard D. Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1914* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 32.
18. Homer Lea, *The Valor of Ignorance* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1942 [1909]), p. 173.
19. Ibid., pp. 183-184.

20. Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy*, p. 32.

21. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1904*, p. 45.

22. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, p. 250.

23. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1904*, pp. 43-44.

24. E. B. Potter (ed.), *The United States and World Sea Power* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 457.

25. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, p. 240.

26. Louis Morton, "Military and Naval Preparation for the Defense of the Philippines During the War Scare of 1907." From *Military Affairs, Volume XIII, Number 2, Summer, 1949* (Washington: American Military Institute, 1949), p. 95.

27. Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy*, p. 232.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

30. Ibid., pp. 258-260.

31. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, p. 240.

32. Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy*, p. 245.

33. Count Hayashi Tadasu, *The Secret Memoirs of Count Tadasu Hayashi* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), pp. 251-252.

34. Morton, "Military and Naval Preparation During War Scare of 1907," pp. 100-101.

35. Ibid., p. 104.

36. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, p. 249.

37. Morison, *Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, V*, p. 475.

38. Paterson, et. al., *American Foreign Policy, I*, p. 240.

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